Al-Asaaleeb al-Nabawiyyah

The Prophet's Methods for Correcting People's Mistakes

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Introduction

Bismillaah il-Rahmaan il-Raheem

In the Name of Allaah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds, Master of the Day of Judgement, God of the first and the last, Sustainer of heaven and earth, and peace and blessings be upon His trustworthy Prophet, the Teacher of mankind, sent as a Mercy to the worlds.

Teaching people is one of the greatest good deeds whose benefits spread to others. It is the daiy'ahs' and educators' share of the heritage of the Prophets and Messengers. "Allaah and the angels, and even the ant in its nest and the whale in the sea will pray for the one who teaches people the ways of good." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi; *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Ahmad Shaakir edn., no. 2685. Abu 'Eesa said, this is a saheeh ghareeb hasan hadeeth). There are different types and ways of teaching, with different means and methods, one of which is correcting mistakes. Correcting mistakes is a part of education; they are like inseparable twins.

Dealing with and correcting mistakes is also a part of sincerity in religion (*naseehah*) which is a duty on all Muslims. The connection between this and the concept of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, which is also a duty, is quite obvious (but we should note that the area of mistakes is broader than the area of evil (*munkar*), so a mistake may or may not be evil as such).

Correcting mistakes also formed a part of the *wahy* (revelation) and the methodology of the Qur'aan. The Qur'aan brought commands and prohibitions, approvals and denunciations and correction of mistakes – even those on the part of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). So it included rebukes and pointing out of mistakes, for example (interpretation of the meaning):

"(The Prophet) frowned and turned away,

Because there came to him the blind man ['Abd-Allaah ibn Umm Maktoom, whilst he was preaching to one or some of the chiefs of Quraysh],

But what could tell you that perchance he might become pure (from sins)?

Or that he might receive admonition, and that the admonition might profit him?

As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient,

To him you attend;

What does it matter to you if he will not become pure (from disbelief, you are only a Messenger, your duty is to convey the Message of Allaah).

But as to him who came to you running, And is afraid (of Allaah and His Punishment), Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another." ['Abasa 80:1-10]

"And remember when you (Muhammad) said to him (Zayd ibn Haarithah – the freed slave of the Prophet) on whom Allaah has bestowed Grace (by guiding him to Islam) and you (too) have done a favour (by freeing him), 'Keep your wife to yourself and fear Allaah.' But you did hide in yourself (what Allaah had already made known to you – i.e. that He will give her to you in marriage) that which Allaah will make mainfest, you did fear the people whereas Allaah had a better right that you should fear Him…" [al-Ahzaab 33:38]

"Not for you (O Muhammad) is the decision; whether He turns in mercy to (pardons) them or punishes them; verily, they are the zaalimoon (polytheists, disobedient, wrong-doers, etc.)." [Aal 'Imraan 3:128]

Qur'aan was also revealed to correct the mistakes of some of the Sahaabah in some situations. When Haatib ibn Abi Balta'ah (may Allaah be pleased with him) made the mistake of writing to the kuffaar of Quraysh and informing them of the direction in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was headed on a military campaign against them, Allaah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e., disbelievers and polytheists, etc.) as friends, showing affection towards them, while they have disbelieved

in what has come to you of the truth, and have driven out the Messenger and yourselves (from your homeland) because you believe in Allaah your Lord! If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure, (then take not these disbelievers and polytheists, etc., as your friends). You show friendship to them in secret, while I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whosoever of you (Muslims) does that, then indeed he has gone (far) astray, (away) from the Straight Path." [al-Mumtahinah 60:1]

Concerning the mistake made by the archers at the battle of Uhud, who left the position where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had commanded them to stay, Allaah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning):

"… until (the moment) you lost your courage and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed after He showed you (of the booty) which you love. Among you are some that desire this world and some that desire the Hereafter…" [Aal- 'Imraan 3:152]

When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stayed away from his wives in order to discipline them, and some people spread rumours that he had divorced them, Allaah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning):

"When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people), if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly)…" [al-Nisa' 4:83]

When some of the Muslims failed to migrate from Makkah to Madeenah with no legitimate excuse, Allaah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily! As for those whom the nagels take (in death) while they are wronging themselves (as they stayed among the disbelievers even though emigration was obligatroy for them), they (angels) say (to them): 'In what (condition) were you?' They reply: 'We were weak and oppressed on earth.' They (angels) say: 'Was not the earth of Allaah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?' …" [al-Nisa' 4:97]

When some of the Sahaabah believed and repeated the rumours of the munaafiqeen accusing 'Aa'ishah of something she was innocent of, Allaah revealed aayaat concerning this lie, including (interpretation of the meaning):

"Had it not been for the Grace of Allaah and His Mercy unto you in this world and in the Hereafter, a great torment would have touched you for that whereof you had spoken. When you were propagating it with your tongues and uttering with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge, you counted it a little thing, while with Allaah it was very great."

[al-Noor 24:14]

Then Allaah said (interpretation of the meaning):

"And why did you not, when you heard it, say – 'It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allaah), this is a great lie'?

Allaah forbids you from it and warns you not to repeat the like of it forever, if you are believers."

[al-Noor 24:16-17]

When some of the Sahaabah argued in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and raised their voices, Allaah revealed (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allaah and His Messenger, and fear Allaah. Verily! Allaah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds may be rendered fruitless while you perceive not."

[al-Hujuraat 49:1-2]

When the caravan came at the time of the Friday khutbah, and some of the people left the khutbah and dispersed to engage in trade, Allaah revealed the words:

"And when they see some merchandise or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave you (Muhammad) standing [while delivering the Friday khutbah]. Say: 'That which Allaah has is better than any amusement or merchandise! And Allaah is the Best of Providers.'"

[al-Jumu'ah 62:11]

Many other examples also indicate the importance of correcting mistakes and not keeping quiet about them.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was guided by the Light of his Lord in following the principle of denouncing evil and correcting mistakes with no compromise. From this and other reports the scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) derived the principle: it is not permitted for the Prophet to delay speaking up and explaining mistakes at the appropriate time."

Understanding the Prophet's methodology in dealing with the mistakes of the people he met is of great importance, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was guided by his Lord, and his words and deeds were supported by the *wahy*, and confirmed or corrected as needed. His methods are wiser and more efficacious, and using his approach is the best way to get people to respond positively. If the one who is in a position to guide and teach others adopts these methods and this approach, his efforts will be successful. Following the method and approach of the

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also involves following his example, for he is the best example for us, and this will lead us to a great reward from Allaah, if our intention is sincere.

Knowing the methods of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) exposes the failure of the man-made methodology – which is followed everywhere on this earth – and proves to the followers of that methodology that it is a failure. Much of it is clearly a deviation that is based on corrupt theories such as absolute freedom, or it is derived from false heritages such a blind imitation of one's fathers and forefathers.

We must point out that the practical application of this methodology in real life relies heavily on ijtihaad (studying the situation and attempting to determine the best approach) to a great extent. This involves selecting the best methods for a particular situation. Whoever understands people's nature will be able to notice similarities between real life situations and situations described in the texts, so he will be able to choose the most appropriate method from among the methods of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

This book is an attempt to study the methods of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in dealing with mistakes made by people of different levels and backgrounds, among those who lived with him and with whom he interacted. I ask Allaah to make it successful and free of mistakes, to benefit my Muslim brothers and me through it, for He is in control of all things and He is able to do this, and He is the Guide to the Straight Path.

Points to be noted when dealing with mistakes

Before we embark on our discussion we should note some issues and considerations that we should bear in mind before and when dealing with and correcting the mistakes of others.

Sincerity towards Allaah

When correcting the mistakes of others, it is essential that one's intention be to earn the pleasure of Allaah, not to demonstrate one's superiority or to vent one's anger or to impress others.

Al-Tirmidhi (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from Shufayy al-Asbahi that he entered Madeenah and saw a man with people gathered around him. He asked, "Who is this?" They said, "Abu Hurayrah." [Shufayy said:] "So I approached him and sat down in front of him. He was speaking to the people, and when he finished and they had gone away, I said to him, 'I ask you by Allaah, to narrate to me a hadeeth that you heard from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and understood fully.' Abu Hurayrah said, 'I will do that, I will tell you a hadeeth I heard from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and understood fully.' Then Abu Hurayrah began to gasp, and remained in this condition until he recovered, then he said, 'I will tell you a hadeeth that the Messenger of Allah

(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told me in this house when there was no one else present except me and him.' Then Abu Hurayrah began to gasp again, then he recovered and wiped his face, and said, 'I will tell you a hadeeth that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told me in this house when there was no one else present except me and him.' Then he gasped, then he recovered and wiped his face and said, 'I will tell you a hadeeth that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told me in this house when there was no one else present except me and him.' Then Abu Hurayrah began to gasp severely, and his head fell forward, and I supported him with my shoulder for a long time, then he recovered, and said: 'The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told me: 'When the Day of Judgement comes, Allaah will come down to judge between the people. And every nation will be kneeling in submission. The first people to be called forth will be a man who had learned the Qur'aan by heart, a man who was killed for the sake of Allaah and a man who had a lot of wealth. Allaah will say to the reader, 'Did I not teach you that which I had revealed to My Messenger?' He will say, 'Of course, My Lord.' Allaah will say, 'What did you do with what you were taught?' He will say, 'I stayed up at night and during the day (to recite it).' Allaah will say, 'You have lied,' and the angels will say, 'You have lied.' Allaah will say, 'You only wanted it to be said that so-and-so is a reader, and it was said.' The one who had a lot of wealth will be brought and Allaah will say to him, 'Did I not give generously to you so that you were not in need of anyone?' He will say, 'Of course, O Lord.' Allaah will say, 'What did you do with what I gave you?' He will say, 'I used to give it to my relatives and in charity.' Allaah will say, 'You have lied,' and the angels will say, 'You have lied.' Allaah will say, 'You only wanted it to be said that so-and-so is generous, and it was said. Then the one who was killed for the sake of Allaah will be brought and Allaah will say to him, 'What were you killed for?' He will say, 'I was commanded to fight in jihaad for Your sake so I fought until I was killed.' Allaah will say, 'You have lied,' and the angels will say, 'You have lied.' Allaah will say, 'You only want it to be said that so-and-so was courageous, and it was said.' Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) struck my knees and said, 'O Abu Hurayrah, these three are the first people for whom the Fire will be heated on the Day of Resurrection.'" (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 2382, Shaakir edn. Abu 'Eesa said: this is a ghareeb hasan hadeeth).

If the intention of the person giving advice is sincere, he will earn reward and his advice will be accepted and acted upon, by the permission of Allaah.

- Making mistakes is part of human nature.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Every son of Adam makes mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2499, and by Ibn Maajah, who narrated this version – *al-Sunan*, ed. by 'Abd al-Baqi, no. 4251)

Bearing this fact clearly in mind will put things into their proper perspective, so the educator should not expect people to be perfect or infallible or judge them according to what he thinks they should be, and then consider them to have failed if they make a big mistake or err repeatedly. He should deal with them in a realistic manner, based on

his knowledge of human nature which is subject to ignorance, negligence, shortcomings, whims and desires and forgetfulness.

Understanding this fact will also prevent an educator from being greatly shocked by the kind of sudden mistake that could lead him to react in an inappropriate fashion. This will remind the da’iyah and educator who is striving to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil that he too is a human being who could also make the same mistake, so he should deal with him on a footing of compassion rather than harshness, because the basic aim is to reform, not to punish.

But this does not mean that we should leave people who are making mistakes alone, or find excuses for those who are committing sins on the basis that they are only human or that they are just youngsters, or that the modern age is full of temptations and so on. We must denounce the actions and call the people to account, but at the same time we must evaluate their actions according to Islam.

- Saying that someone is wrong should be based on shar'i evidence and proper understanding, not on ignorance and that fact that one happens not to like it. Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir reported that Jaabir prayed wearing only an *izar* (lower garment wrapped around the waist) tied at the back [the reason for this is that they did not have trousers, and they would wear their izar tied at the back because this was more concealing when they did rukoo’ and sujood. *Fath al-Baari,* al-Salafiyyah edn., 1/467], and his other clothes were on a clothes hook. Someone said to him, ‘Are you praying in one garment?’ He said, ‘I only did it so that some foolish person like you would see me. Who among us had two garments at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?’” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath,* no. 352). Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “What is meant by ‘foolish’ here is ‘ignorant’… The purpose was to explain that it is permissible to pray wearing only one garment, although wearing two garments is preferable. It is as if he was saying, ‘I did it on purpose to show that it is permissible, so that one who does not know could follow me in that or he could rebuke me so that I could teach him that it is permissible.’ The reason why his answer was so harsh was so that he could teach them not to rebuke the scholars and to urge them to look into shar'i matters themselves.” (*al-Fath,* 1/467)

- The more serious a mistake is, the more effort should be made to correct it.

Efforts to correct mistakes that have to do with *‘aqeedah* should be greater than those to correct mistakes that have to do with etiquette, for example. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was intensely concerned about dealing with and correcting mistakes that had to do with *shirk* in all its forms, because this was the most important matter. Examples of this follow:

Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu’bah said: “There was an eclipse of the sun on the day that [the Prophet’s infant son] Ibraaheem died, and the people said, ‘This eclipse is because of the death of Ibraaheem.’ The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allaah, they do not

become eclipsed for the death or life of anyone. If you see them (eclipsed) then call on Allaah and pray to Him until the eclipse is over.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 1061).

Abu Waaqid al-Laythi reported that when the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out to Hunayn, he passed by a tree belonging to the mushrikeen that was called Dhaat Anwaat, on which they used to hang their weapons. They said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, make for us a Dhaat Anwaat like they have.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Subhaan-Allaah! This is like what the people of Moosa said, "Make for us a god as they have gods." By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you will follow the ways of the people who came before you.'" (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2180. He said, This is a saheeh hasan hadeeth).

According to another report narrated by Abu Waaqid, they went out from Makkah with the Messenger of Allaah to Hunayn. He said: "The kuffaar had a lotus-tree to which they were devoted and on which they used to hang their weapons; it was called Dhaat Anwaat. We passed by a big, green lotus-tree, and we said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, make this a Dhaat Anwat for us.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you have said what the people of Moosa said to him, "Make for us a god as they have gods," and he said, "Verily, you are a people who know not." It is the same thing, and you will follow the ways of the people who came before you, step by step.'" (Reported by Ahmad, *al-Sunan*, 5/218).

Zayd ibn Khaalid al-Juhani said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led us in Subh (Fajr) prayer at al-Hudaybiyah just after it had rained in the night. When he finished, he turned to the people and said, 'Do you know what your Lord says?" They said, 'Allaah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'This morning one of My slaves became a believer in Me, and one a disbeliever. As for the one who said, we have been given rain by the Grace and Mercy of Allaah, he is a believer in Me and a disbeliever in the stars; and as for him who said, we have been given rain by such-and-such a star, he is a disbeliever in Me and a believer in the stars.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, no. 846).

Ibn 'Abbaas reported that a man said, "O Messenger of Allaah, whatever Allaah and you will." He said, "Are you making me equal to Allaah? [Say instead:] What Allaah alone wills." (Reported by Ahmad, *al-Musnad*, 1/283).

Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both) reported that he caught up with 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab who was with a group of people and was swearing by his father. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called them and told them that Allaah had forbidden them to swear by their forefathers; the one who wanted to swear an oath should swear by Allaah or else keep quiet. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 6108)

Note: Imaam Ahmad reported in his *Musnad*: Wakee' told us that al-A'mash told us from Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah who said: "I was with Ibn 'Umar in a circle and he heard a man in another circle saying, 'No, by my father.' So Ibn 'Umar threw pebbles at him and

said, 'This is how 'Umar used to swear, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade him to do this and said that it was *shirk*.'" (*al-Fath al-Rabbaani*, 14/164).

Abu Shurayh Haani' ibn Yazeed said: "A delegation of people came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and he heard them calling one of them Abd al-Hajar ("slave of the stone"). He asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, ' 'Abd al-Hajar.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'No, you are 'Abd-Allaah (slave of Allaah).'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 813. Al-Albaani said in *Saheeh al-Adab al-Mufrad* that it is saheeh, no. 623).

- Taking into account the position of the person who is striving to correct the mistake

Some people's advice may be more readily accepted than others' because they have a status that others do not, or because, unlike others, they have authority over the person who has made the mistake, for example, a father with his child or a teacher with his student or a government official with the one whom he is inspecting. One who is older is not like one who is younger, a relative is not like a stranger, a person with authority is not like one with no authority. Understanding these differences will make the reformer put things into perspective and evaluate them properly, so that his rebuke or correction will not lead to a greater evil. The position of the one who is rebuking and the esteem in which he is held by the one who has made the mistake are very important in judging how strong the rebuke should be and deciding how harsh or gentle the tone should be. From this we learn two things:

Firstly, that the person to whom Allaah has given status or authority should use that to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and to teach people. He should understand that he has a great responsibility because people will accept more from him than from other people – usually – so he can do more than others can.

Secondly, the person who seeks to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil should not misjudge the situation and put himself in a higher position than is in fact the case and behave as if he has qualities that he does not have, because this will only put people off.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) made the most of the position of respect that Allaah had given him when he was rebuking and teaching people. He did things that would not have been appropriate if they were done by anyone else, examples of which follow:

Ya'eesh ibn Tihfah al-Ghiffaari reported that his father said: "I was a guest of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), one of the poor to whom he played host. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out to check on his guests during the night, and saw me lying on my stomach. He kicked me and said, 'Don't lie like this; this is the kind of lying that Allaah hates.'" According to another report: "He kicked him and woke him up, and said, 'This is how

the people of Hell lie.'" (Reported by Ahmad, *al-Fath al-Rabbaani*, 14/244-245. Also reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2798, Shaakir edn.; by Abu Dawood in *Kitaab al-Adab* in his *Sunan*, no. 5040, al-Da''aas edn. The hadeeth is also in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 2270-2271).

This method of rebuking was appropriate for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) because of his position and status, but it is not appropriate for ordinary people. It is not alright for any person who wants to rebuke another for sleeping on his stomach to kick him whilst he is asleep and wake him up, and then expect him to accept this advice and thank him for it. The same applies to hitting a person who is making a mistake or throwing something like pebbles or whatever at him. Although some of the salaf did that, it was because of their particular status. Some stories of this nature follow:

Al-Daarimi (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from Sulaymaan ibn Yassaar that a man called Sabeegh came to Madeenah and started to ask about the ambiguous texts of the Qur'aan. 'Umar sent for him, and he had prepared some date palm branches for him (to hit him with). ['Umar] asked him, "Who are you?' He said, "I am the slave of Allaah, Sabeegh." 'Umar took hold of one of the palm branches and hit him, saying, "I am the slave of Allaah, 'Umar." He kept hitting him until his head began to bleed, and he said, "O Ameer al-Mu'mineen, enough! [The ideas that] were in my head have gone!" (*Sunan al-Daarimi*, ed. by 'Abd-Allaah Haashim Yamaani, 1/51, no. 146).

Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that Ibn Abi Layla said: "Hudhayfah was in al-Madaa'in and asked for a drink, and a grandee gave him a vessel of silver. He threw it at him and said, 'I would not have thrown it, but I told him not to do it and he didn't stop. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade us from wearing silk and brocade, and from drinking from vessels of gold and silver. He said, 'These are for them in this world and for you in the Hereafter.'" (*al-Fath*, no. 5632).

According to a report narrated by Ahmad, describing the same incident, 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Abi Laylaa said: "I went out with Hudhayfah to one of these areas, and he asked for something to drink. A grandee brought him a vessel of silver and he (Hudhayfah) threw it in his face. We said, 'Be quiet, be quiet, if we ask why he did it, he might not tell us.' So we were quiet, and a little while later he said, 'Do you know why I threw it in his face?' We said, 'No.' He said, 'I had told him not to do it. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Do not drink from vessels of gold," and Mu'aadh said, "Do not drink from vessels of gold or silver, and do not wear silk or brocade; these are for them in this world and for you in the Hereafter."'" (*al-Musnad*, 5/396)

Al-Bukhaari narrated that Seereen asked Anas to write him a contract of manumission, as he had plenty of money, but Anas refused. Seereen went to 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), who told Anas to write the document, and Anas still refused, so 'Umar hit him with a whip whilst reciting the words (interpretation of the meaning): *"… give them [slaves seeking emancipation] such writing [of a document of*

manumission], if you know that they are good and trustworthy…" [al-Noor 24:33], so he wrote the document for him. (*Al-Fath*, 5/184).

Al-Nisaa'i reported from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that he was praying when a son of Marwaan came in front of him, so he checked him, and when he did not go back, he hit him. The boy went out crying, and went to Marwaan and told him what had happened. Marwaan asked Abu Sa'eed, "Why did you hit the son of your brother?" He said, "I did not hit him, I hit the Shaytaan. I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: 'If any one of you is praying and someone wants to pass in front of him, let him stop him as much as he can, and if he refuses then fight him, for he is a devil.'" (*al-Mujtaba min Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, 8/61; *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 4518)

Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from Abu'l-Nadr that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri was suffering from a sore leg, and his brother came in and saw him lying with one leg crossed over the other, so he hit him on the sore leg, making it hurt even more. He said, "You hurt my leg! Didn't you know it is sore?" He said, "Of course I knew." He said, "What made you do that?" He said, "Did you not hear that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade us to sit like this?" (*al-Musnad*, 3/42)

Maalik reported from Abu'l-Zubayr al-Makki that a man proposed marriage to another man's sister, and he [the brother] told him that she had committed zinaa. News of this reached 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab, so he hit him or nearly hit him, and said, "Why did you tell him?" (*Muwatta' Maalik*, no. 1553, report of Abu Mus'ab al-Zuhri, ed. by Bashshaar Ma'roof and Mahmood Khaleel. Mu'sasat al-Risaalah).

Muslim reported in his *Saheeh* from Abu Ishaaq who said: "I was with al-Aswad ibn Yazeed in the Great Mosque, and al-Sha'bi was with us. Al-Sha'bi told us about what Faatimah bint Qays had said about the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) not providing housing or an income for her. Al-Aswad took a handful of pebbles and threw them at him, saying, 'Woe to you! You talk about something like this? 'Umar said that we should not leave the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for the words of a woman who we cannot be sure has remembered things properly or not. Women have the right to accommodation and an income. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"… and turn them not out of their homes, not shall they (themselves) leave, except in case they are guilty of some open illegal sexual intercourse…" [al-Talaaq 65:1]*.'" (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 1480).

Abu Dawood reported, with an isnaad in which two men are maqbool, that two men entered from the doors of Kindah, when Abu Mas'ood al-Ansaari was sitting in a circle. The two men said, "Is there any man who will judge between us?" A man in the circle said, "I will." Abu Mas'ood took a handful of pebbles and threw them at him, saying, "Shut up! It is disliked to hasten to judgement." (Reported by Abu Dawood, *Kitaab al-Aqdiyah, Bab fi talab al-qada' wa al-tasarru' ilayhi*)

We should also note that the Prophet's rebuking of some of his closest Companions was, on occasions, harsher than his rebuking of a bedouin, for example, or a stranger. All of this has to do with wisdom and proper evaluation in rebuking.

- Making a distinction between one who errs out of ignorance and one who errs despite his knowledge

One of the stories that illustrate this clearly is what happened to Mu'aawiyah ibn al-Hakam al-Salami when he came to Madeenah from the desert, and he did not know that it is forbidden to speak during the salaah. He said: "Whilst I was praying behind the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man sneezed, so I said '*Yarhamuk Allaah* (may Allaah have mercy on you).' The people glared at me, so I said, 'May my mother lose me! What is wrong with you that you are looking at me?' They began to slap their thighs with their hands, and when I saw that they were indicating that I should be quiet, I stopped talking (i.e., I nearly wanted to answer them back, but I controlled myself and kept quiet). When the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had finished praying – may my father and mother be sacrificed for him, I have never seen a better teacher than him before or since – he did not rebuke me or hit me or put me to shame. He just said, 'This prayer should contain nothing of the speech of men; it is only tasbeeh and takbeer and recitation of the Qur'aan.'" (*Saheeh Muslim*, 'Abd al-Baaqi edn., no. 537).

The ignorant person needs to be taught; the one who has doubts needs to have things explained to him; the negligent person needs to be reminded; and the one who wilfully persists in error needs to be warned. It is not right to treat one who knows about a ruling and one who is ignorant of it in the same manner when rebuking them. Treating one who does not know too harshly will only put him off and make him refuse to follow your advice, unlike teaching him with wisdom and gentleness, because an ignorant person simply does not realize that he is making a mistake. It is as if he is saying to the one who is rebuking him: "Why don't you teach me before you launch an attack on me?"

The one who is making a mistake without realizing it may think that he is right, so we should take this into account and deal with him tactfully. Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported in al-Musnad from al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ate some food, then got up to pray. He had already done wudoo' before that, but I brought some water for him to do wudoo', He rebuffed me and said, 'Go away!' I felt upset, by Allaah. He prayed, and I complained to 'Umar about what had happened. He said, 'O Prophet of Allaah, al-Mugheerah feels hurt by your rebuff, and he is worried that you may be angry with him for some reason.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'I see only good in him, but he brought me water to do wudoo' after I had eaten some food, and if I had done wudoo' then, the people would have followed suit [i.e., they would have thought that they had to do wudoo' every time they had eaten something].'" (*al-Musnad,* 4/253)

We should note here that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) pointed out the mistakes of these great Sahaabah, it did not have a negative impact on them or put them off; rather, it had a positive effect on them, and having been corrected in this manner by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), they would remain anxious and worried, watching their behaviour and feeling concerned until they could be sure that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was pleased with them.

We may also note from this story that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) pointed out al-Mugheerah's mistake, he was not angry with al-Mugheerah himself; he did this out of mercy to the people and to explain things clearly to them, so that they would not impose something on themselves that was not waajib and that would cause them a great deal of hardship.

- Making a distinction between mistakes stemming from an honest effort to find out what is right (ijtihaad), and mistakes done deliberately, out of negligence or because of shortcomings

There is no doubt that in the first case, a person is not to be blamed; indeed he will earn one reward even if he is mistaken, so long as his intention was sincere and he tried to reach the right conclusion, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If a ruler judges and strives to make the right decision, and his decision is correct, he will have two rewards, and if his decision is wrong, he will still have one reward." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 1326, Shaakir edn. Abu 'Eesa al-Tirmidhi said it is a ghareeb hasan hadeeth in this version.)

This is a different case from one who errs deliberately or because of shortcomings. In the first instance, the person should be taught and advised; in the second, he should be warned and rebuked.

The ijtihaad which may be excused should be done on the part of one who is qualified, not one who gives fatwas without knowledge and without taking circumstances into account. This is why the Prophet severely denounced the people who made the mistake in the case of the man with the head wound. Abu Dawood narrated in his *Sunan* from Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: "We went out on a journey, and one of the men with us was struck in the head with a stone and started bleeding. Then he slept and when he woke up he needed to do *ghusl* (he was in state of *janaabah* or impurity). He asked his companions, 'Do you think I could get away with doing *tayammum*?' They said, 'We don't think you have any excuse because water is available.' So he did ghusl, and he died. When we came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and he was told about this, he said, 'They have killed him, may Allaah kill them! Why did they not ask if they did not know? The cure of the one who does not know is to ask…'" (*Sunan Abi Dawood*, *Kitaab al-Tahaarah*, *Baab al-majrooh yatayammam*; al-Albaani classed it as hasan in *Saheeh Abi Dawood*, 325, and indicated that the extra material added at the end of the hadeeth is *da'eef*)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said that judges are of three types, one will be in Paradise and the other two in Hell. The type that will be in Paradise is a man who knows the truth and judges accordingly. A man who knows the truth but judges unjustly will be in Hell, and a man who judges between people without proper knowledge will also be in Hell. (*Sunan Abi Dawood*, no. 3573; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *al-Irwa'*, 2164). The third type is not regarded as having any excuse.

Another factor in gauging the degree of rebuking is paying attention to the environment in which the mistake occurred, such as whether it was an environment in which the Sunnah is followed or bid'ah is widespread, or how prevalent evil is, or whether there are ignorant or overly lenient people, whose opinions are widely followed, issuing fatwas to say that it is permissible.

- A good intention on the part of the one who makes the mistake does not mean that he should not be rebuked

'Amr ibn Yahya said: "I heard my father narrating from his father who said: 'We were at the door of 'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood before the early morning prayer. When he came out we walked with him to the mosque. Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari came up to us and said, "Did Abu 'Abd al-Rahmaan come out to you yet?" We said, "No." He sat down with us until [Abu 'Abd al-Rahmaan] came out. When he came out, we all stood up to greet him, and Abu Moosa said to him: "O Abu 'Abd al-Rahmaan, earlier I saw in the mosque something that I have never seen before, but it seems good, al-hamdu Lillaah." He said, "And what was it?" He said, "if you live, you will see it. I saw people in the mosque sitting in circles waiting for the prayer. In every circle there was a man, and they had pebbles in their hands. He would say, 'Say *Allaahu akbar* one hundred times,' and they would say *Allaahu akbar* one hundred times; then he would say, 'Say *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah* one hundred times,' and they would say *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah* one hundred times; then he would say, 'Say *Subhaan Allaah* one hundred times,' and they would say *Subhaan Allaah* one hundred times.' He asked, 'What did you say to them?' He said, 'I did not say anything to them; I was waiting to see what your opinion would be and what you would tell me to do.' He said, 'Why did you not tell them to count their bad deeds and guarantee them that nothing of their good deeds would be wasted?' Then he left, and we went with him, until he reached one of those circles. He stood over them and said, 'What is this I see you doing?' They said, 'O Abu 'Abd al-Rahmaan, these are pebbles we are using to count our *takbeer, tahleel* and *tasbeeh*.' He said, 'Count your bad deeds, and I guarantee that nothing of your good deeds will be wasted. Woe to you, O ummah of Muhammad, how quickly you are getting destroyed! The Companions of your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) are still alive, his garment is not yet worn out and his vessels are not yet broken. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, either you are following a way that is more guided than that of Muhammad or you have opened the door of misguidance!' They said, 'By Allaah, O Abu 'Abd al-Rahmaan, we only wanted to do good.' He said, 'How many of those who wanted to do good failed to achieve it! The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us that people recite Qur'aan and it does not go any further than their throats. By Allaah, I do not know, maybe most of them are people like you.' Then he turned away from them.

'Amr ibn Salamah said, 'I saw most of the members of those circles fighting alongside the Khawaarij on the day of Nahrawaan.'" (Reported by al-Daarimi, *al-Sunan*, no. 210, ed. by 'Abd-Allaah Haashim al-Yamaani. Al-Albaani classed its isnaad as saheeh in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah* under hadeeth no. 2005. See *Majma' al-Zawaa'id* by al-Haythami, 1/181).

- Being fair and not being biased when correcting those who make mistakes

Allaah says (interpretation of the meanings):

"And whenever you give your word (i.e., judge between men or give evidence), say the truth…" [al-An'aam 6:152]

"… and when you judge between men, you [should] judge with justice…" [al-Nisa' 4:58]

The fact that Usaamah ibn Zayd was the beloved of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the son of his beloved [Zayd] did not stop the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) from rebuking him most sternly when he tried to intercede regarding one of the punishments (*hudood*) prescribed by Allaah. 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) reported that Quraysh were concerned about a woman who stole at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), at the time of the Conquest of Makkah. They said, 'Who will speak to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about her? Who will dare to do this other than Usaamah ibn Zayd, the beloved of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?' She was brought to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and Usaamah ibn Zayd spoke to him concerning her. The face of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) changed colour and he said: 'Are you interceding concerning one of the punishments prescribed by Allaah?' Usaamah said to him, 'Pray for forgiveness for me, O Messenger of Allaah.' When evening came, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood up and addressed the people. He praised Allaah as He deserves to be praised, then he said: 'The people who came before you were destroyed because if one of their nobles stole, they would let him go, but if one of the weak among them stole, they would carry out the punishment on him. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if Faatimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut off her hand.' Then he ordered that the woman who had stolen should have her hand cut off." (The hadeeth was reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim; this version was narrated by Muslim, no. 1688).

According to a report narrated by al-Nisaa'i from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), she said: "A woman borrowed some jewellery, claiming that she wanted to lend it to someone else, but she sold it and kept the money. She was brought to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Her family went to Usaamah ibn Zayd, who spoke to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) concerning her. The face of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) changed colour whilst Usaamah was speaking, then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him: 'Are you

interceding concerning one of the punishments prescribed by Allaah?' Usaamah said, 'Pray for forgiveness for me, O Messenger of Allaah.' In the evening, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood up, praised Allaah as He deserves to be praised, then said, 'The people who came before you were destroyed because if one of their nobles stole, they would let him go, but if one of the weak among them stole, they would carry out the punishment on him. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if Faatimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut off her hand.' Then he ordered that the woman's hand should be cut off." (*Sunan al-Nisaa'i, al-Mujtabaa*, Dar al-Fikr edn., 8/73. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 4548).

The Prophet's attitude towards Usaamah (may Allaah be pleased with him) indicates that he was fair and just, and that Islam came before love of people in his view. A person may put up with the personal faults of whoever he wishes, but he has no right to be tolerant or biased towards those whose mistakes transgress the limits set by Islam.

Sometimes, when a relative or friend makes a mistake, a person does not rebuke him as he would a person whom he does not know, so one may see unIslamic bias or discrimination in his dealings because of this, and a person may turn a blind eye to his friend's mistake while harshly criticizing another person.

[An Arab poet once said:]

"If you are happy with a person, you do not see his mistakes, but if you are angry with him, you see them all."

This may also be reflected in the way in which actions are interpreted. An action on the part of a person one loves will be taken one way, and the same deed on the part of another person will be taken quite differently.

All of the above applies only when circumstances are the same, otherwise there could be different considerations as we will see below.

- Being careful lest correcting one mistake leads to a bigger mistake

It is a well-established fact that Islam allows the lesser of two evils in order to repel a greater evil. So a da'iyah may keep quiet about one mistake lest saying something lead to a more serious mistake.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) kept quiet about the munaafiqeen and did not execute them, even though their kufr was well-established. He bore their insults with patience, lest people say, "Muhammad is killing his companions," especially since their true nature was not known to everyone. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not destroy the Ka'bah in order to rebuild it on the foundations laid by Ibraaheem, out of consideration towards Quraysh who were still new in Islam and too close to their recent *jaahiliyyah*. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) feared that it might be too much for them, so he left it as it was, with part

missing, and the door set high up and closed to the masses, even though this contains an element of *zulm* (wrongdoing or oppression).

Before this, Allaah had told the Muslims not to insult the gods of the mushrikeen, even though this is a form of worship, because this could lead to people insulting Allaah, which is the worst of evil.

A dai'yah may keep quiet about a wrong action, or defer rebuking, or change his approach, if he thinks that by doing so he will avoid a greater evil or mistake. This is not considered to be shortcoming or negligence so long as his intention is sincere and he does not fear anyone except Allaah, and it was only concern for the best interests of Islam, not cowardice, that stopped him from saying anything.

We may note that what causes a greater evil when rebuking for one mistake is zealousness which is not checked or controlled.

- Understanding the human nature from which the mistake sprang

There are some mistakes which can never be fully eradicated, because they have to do with the way Allaah has created people. It is possible to reduce them a little, but going to extremes in dealing with them will lead to a disaster. Such is the case of women. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Woman was created from a rib, and she will not behave consistently towards you. If you enjoy her company, then enjoy it despite her crookedness. If you try to straighten her you will break her, and her breaking is her divorce." (Reported by Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), no. 1468).

According to another report: "Be kind to women, for they were created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is the top. If you try to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it alone, it will stay crooked. So be kind to women." (Reported by al-Bukhaari from Abu Hurayrah. *Al-Fath*, no. 5186).

Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "The words 'treat women kindly' indicate that you should try to put them right gently, because if you go to extremes in trying to straighten them you will break them, and if you leave them they will remain crooked… What we learn from this is that we should not leave them crooked if they go beyond the natural expected shortcomings and commit sins or neglect duties. What is meant is that we can leave them crooked with regard to permissible matters. We also learn from the hadeeth that a gentle approach wins people over and opens their hearts. It also tells us to deal with women by being easy going with them, and to bear their crookedness with patience. Whoever insists on putting them right will not benefit from them, and as a man cannot do without a woman to enjoy the pleasure of living with her and to be his support in life, it is as if he said: you cannot enjoy her company unless you put up with her." (*Fath*, 9/954).

- Making a distinction between mistakes that transgress the limits of Islam and mistakes that only affect other people

If Islam is dearer to us than our own selves, we must defend it and protect it and get angry for its sake more than we get angry for our own sakes and defend our own selves. It is a sign of not having religious feelings if we see a man getting angry for his own sake if someone insults him, but not getting angry for the sake of Allaah's religion if anybody insults it; at most, we may see him feebly defending it in an embarrassed manner.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) often used to forgive those who made mistakes in their interactions with him, especially the hard-hearted Bedouin, in order to soften their hearts. Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported in his *Saheeh* that Anas ibn Maalik said: "I was walking with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he was wearing a Najraani cloak with a stiff collar. A Bedouin accosted him, grabbing his cloak in such a manner that the collar left a mark on the Prophet's neck, and said, 'O Muhammad! Give me some of the wealth of Allaah that you have!' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) turned to him and smiled, then ordered that he should be given something." (*al-Fath*, 5809).

But if the mistake had to do with some issue of religion, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would become angry for the sake of Allaah. Examples of this will be given below.

There are some other matters which should also be borne in mind when dealing with people's mistakes, such as:

- Making a distinction between major mistakes and minor mistakes, just as Islam makes a distinction between major sins (kabaa'ir) and minor sins (saghaa'ir).

- Making a distinction between a person who has a track record of many good deeds, which will more or less cancel out the significance of his mistake, and a sinner who transgresses against himself (by doing evil deeds). People may put up with actions on the part of the one with the good track record that they will not put up with on the part of others. This is what happened to al-Siddeeq (Abu Bakr), as the following story illustrates: Asma' bint Abi Bakr said: "We went out with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as pilgrims, and when we reached al-'Arj, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stopped to rest, and we stopped with him. 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) sat beside the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and I sat beside my father. The riding beast shared by Abu Bakr and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was with a slave belonging to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr sat down, waiting for him to catch up, and when he caught up, the camel was not with him. Abu Bakr said, 'Where is the camel?' The slave answered, 'I lost it yesterday.' Abu Bakr said, 'One camel, you lost it?' and started to hit him. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) smiled and said, 'Look at what this *muhrim* (person in a state of ihraam for Hajj) is doing.'" Ibn Abi Rizmah said, 'The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do any more than saying, 'Look at what this muhrim is doing,' and smiling." (Reported by Abu Dawood in his *Sunan*,

Kitaab al-Manaasik, Baab al-Muhrim yu'addib ghulaamahu. Classed as hasan by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, no. 1602)

- Making a distinction between the one who makes mistakes repeatedly and the one who is making a mistake for the first time

- Making a distinction between the one who frequently makes mistakes and the one who rarely does so.

- Making a distinction between the one who makes mistakes openly and blatantly, and one who tries to cover up his mistakes

- Paying attention to cases where a person's adherence to Islam may not be strong and his heart needs to be opened to the religion, so we should not be too harsh with him

- Taking into account a person's situation as regards status and authority

The considerations that we have mentioned above do not contradict the fairness and justice referred to earlier.

- Rebuking a youngster who makes a mistake should be done in a manner appropriate to the child's age.

Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that al-Hasan ibn 'Ali took one of the dates that had been given in charity, and put it in his mouth. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said in Persian, "*Kikh, kikh*, do you not know that we do not eat the sadaqah (things given in charity)?" (*Fath*, 3072).

Al-Tabaraani (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from Zaynab bint Abi Salamah that she entered upon the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) whilst he was performing ghusl. She said, "he took a handful of water and threw it in my face, saying, 'Go away, foolish girl!'" (*al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer*, 24/281. Al-Haythami said, its isnaad is hasan, *al-Majma'*, 1/269)

From this it is clear that a child's tender years do not mean that his mistakes should not be corrected; indeed, correcting his mistakes is giving him the best upbringing, as it will be imprinted in his memory and will benefit him in the future. The first hadeeth shows how a child is taught to fear Allaah and restrain himself, and the second hadeeth shows how he is taught good manners, how to seek permission to enter, and to refrain from looking at the *'awrah* (that which should be covered) of others.

Another brilliant example of correcting children is the story of the young boy 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah. Al-Bukhaari reported that he said: "I was a young boy under the care of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and my hand used to wander all over the plate (at mealtimes). The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to me: 'O young boy! Say Bismillah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is directly in front of you.' This remained my way of eating from that time on." (*al-Fath*, no. 5376)

We may note that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) advised that young boy who made the mistake of letting his hand go everywhere in the food, his words were short, brief and clear, which made it easy for the child to remember and understand; the effect on the boy's heart lasted for a lifetime, as he said, "This remained my way of eating from that time on."

- Exercising caution when advising non-mahram women, so that the advice is not taken wrongly, and so that fitnah (temptation, trouble) is avoided. No young man should use the excuse of speaking to young women in order to correct their mistakes or teach them. How often has this led to disasters! When it comes to correcting women, a large role should be given to *ahl al-hisbah* ("religious police") and older people who could help them in this regard. The person who is seeking to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil must act in accordance with what he thinks will be the outcome of his rebuking. If he thinks that it is likely to be of benefit, he should speak up, otherwise he should refrain from speaking to ignorant women who may make false accusations against him whilst still persisting in their wrongdoing. The state of the society at large and the status of the one who is seeking to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil play a fundamental role in the success of his efforts to rebuke, convey the message or establish evidence. The following story illustrates this:

The freed slave of Abu Raham, whose name was 'Ubayd, reported that Abu Hurayrah met a woman who was wearing perfume, heading for the mosque. He said, "O female slave of al-Jabbaar (the Compeller), where are you going?" She said, "To the mosque." He said, "And you have put on perfume for this?" She said, "Yes." He said, "I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saying, "If any woman puts on perfume and then goes out to the mosque, Allaah will not accept her prayers until she does ghusl." (Reported by Ibn Maajah, no. 4002; see also *Saheeh Ibn Maajah*, 2/367).

According to *Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah*: A woman passed by Abu Hurayrah and her perfume was overwhelming. He said to her, "Where are you going, O female slave of al-Jabbaar?" She said, "To the mosque." He said, "Are you wearing perfume?" She said, "Yes." He said, 'Go back and do ghusl, for I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saying that Allaah does not accept the prayer of any woman who goes out to the mosque with overwhelming perfume, until she goes back and does ghusl." (*Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah*, no. 1682. In his footnote, al-Albaani said, it is a hasan hadeeth. See also *al-Musnad*, 2/246. Ahmad Shaakir classed it as saheeh with this isnaad in his footnote to *al-Musnad*, no. 7350)

- Not occupying oneself with putting the symptoms right whilst neglecting to deal with the cause of the mistake

- Not exaggerating about the mistake

- Not going to extremes to prove the mistake happened or trying to force an admission of guilt from the one who made the mistake

- Allowing enough time for correcting the mistake, especially in the case of one who has been accustomed to doing it for a long time, whilst still following up the matter and continuing to advise and correct

- Not making the one who makes the mistake feel like an enemy, because the aim is to win people over, not score points against them

Now we will move on to our discussion of the methods used by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when dealing with the mistakes of people, as recorded in the saheeh ahaadeeth narrated by the scholars.

The Prophet's methods of dealing with people's mistakes

1- Hastening to deal with people's mistakes and not putting it off

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to hasten to deal with people's mistakes, especially when it was not right for him to delay doing so at the moment when this was needed. His task was to explain the truth to people, teach them to do good, and warn them off from doing evil. So he hastened to correct people on many occasions, as is seen in the stories of the man who was not doing his salaah properly, the Makhzoomi woman, Ibn al-Latbiyyah, Usaamah, the three who wanted to go to extremes in worship, and others. These stories will be related in the course of this discussion, in sha Allaah.

Not hastening to deal with mistakes goes against the interests of Islam and misses out on the opportunity to strike while the iron is hot, as it were.

2 - Dealing with mistakes by explaining the ruling (hukm)

Jarhad (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) passed by him when his thigh was uncovered. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Cover your thigh, for it is part of the 'awrah." (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 2796. Al-Tirmidhi said, this is a hasan hadeeth).

3 - Referring people back to Islam when they make mistakes, and pointing out to them the principle that they are breaking

When someone is indulging in a mistake, the Islamic principle is far from their minds and is lost in the clamour of the moment. In such cases reiterating the Islamic principle and announcing it loudly can be an effective way of stopping the person in his tracks and making him wake up from the stupor that has overtaken him. When we look at what happened between the Muhaajiroon and Ansaar, because of the flames of fitnah stirred up by the munaafiqoon, we will see an example of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used this tactic. Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported in his *Saheeh* that Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "We

went out on a military campaign with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and some of the muhaajiroon went with him too, and they were very many. Among the muhaajiroon was a man who was very playful (a joker). He shoved an Ansaari (in jest), and the Ansaari got very angry with him and called others to support him, saying, 'O Ansaar!' The Muhaajir called out, 'O Muhaajireen!' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out and said, 'What is this call of the people of Jaahiliyyah all about?' Then he said, 'What is the matter with him?' He was told about how the Muhaajir had shoved the Ansaari in jest. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Let it be, for it (tribalism) is evil.'" (*al-Fath*, 3518). According to a report narrated by Muslim, he said: "Let a man help his brother whether he is an wrongdoer or the victim of wrongdoing. If he is a wrongdoer, he should stop him, and if he is the victim of wrongdoing, he should come to his aid." (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 2584).

4 - Correcting misconceptions that are due to something not being clear in people's minds

In *Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, Humayd ibn Abi Humayd al-Taweel reports that he heard Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) saying: "Three people came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), asking about how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) worshipped. When they were told about it, they thought that it was little. They said, "Who are we, compared to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? All his sins, past and future, have been forgiven." (They thought that the one who does not know that his sins have been forgiven needed to go to extremes in worship and do far more than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), in the hope that their sins might be forgiven). One of them said, "As for me, I will pray every night from now on." Another said, "As for me, I will fast for the rest of my life and will never break my fast." The third said, "As for me, I will have nothing to do with women and I will never marry." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to them and said, "Are you the people who said such-and-such? By Allaah, I am the one who fears Allaah more than anyone, but I fast and I break my fast, I pray and I rest, and I get married."

Muslim reported from Anas that a group of the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about what he did in secret. One of them (those Sahaabah) said, "I will never marry women." Another said, "I will never eat meat." Another said, "I will never sleep on a bed." [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] praised and thanked Allaah, then he said, "What is the matter with some people who say such-and-such? But as for me, I pray and I sleep, I fast and I break my fast, and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah has nothing to do with me." (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 1041).

Here we may note the following points:

- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to them and addressed them directly; when he wanted to teach all the people, he did

not refer to them by name or expose them, he merely said, “What is the matter with some people…?” In this way he was gentle with them and covered up for them whilst at the same time acting in the common interest by teaching everybody.

- The hadeeth describes finding out about the action of good people and seeking to emulate them. Investigating such things is the sign of a sound mind and efforts to improve oneself.
- This report indicates that when it comes to useful matters of religion, if it is not possible to learn them from men, it is permissible to learn them from women.
- There is nothing wrong with a person talking about his deeds so long as there is no element of showing off and it is for the benefit of others.
- We also learn that going to extremes in worship may cause a person to get bored, which in turn could lead him to stop worshipping altogether; the best of things are those that are moderate. (see *al-Fath*, 9/104).
- Mistakes generally come about as a result of misconceptions; if the ideas are put right, mistakes will decrease. It is clear from the hadeeth that the reason why those Sahaabah adopted those concepts of extreme worship and monasticism was that they thought they had to go beyond the Prophet’s actions in worship in order to attain salvation, because he had been told that all his sins were forgiven, but they did not have this advantage. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) set them straight, and told them that even though he was forgiven, he was the most fearing of Allaah among mankind, and he commanded them to follow his Sunnah in worship.

A similar thing happened to another Sahaabi, whose name was Kahmas al-Hilaali (may Allaah be pleased with him), who narrated his story: “I became Muslim and came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and told him that I had become Muslim. I stayed away for a year, during which I became very skinny, and when I came back, he looked me up and down. I said, ‘Do you not know me?’ he said, ‘Who are you?’ I said, ‘I am Kahmas al-Hilaali.’ He said, ‘What happened to you?’ I said, ‘After I saw you, I never spent a day without fasting, and I never slept at night.’ He said, ‘Who told you to torture yourself? Fast the month of patience [i.e., Ramadaan], and one day of every month besides that.’ I said, ‘Let me do more.’ He said, ‘Fast the month of patience and two days of every month besides that.’ I said, ‘Let me do more, I am able for it.’ He said, ‘Fast the month of patience and three days of every month besides that.’” (*Musnad al-Tayaalisi*. Reported by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*, 19/194, no. 435. Also in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, no. 2623).

Some misconceptions may be based on how one judges people and regards them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was very keen to correct this and put people straight in this regard. In Saheeh al-Bukhaari, there is a report from Sahl ibn Sa’d al-Saa’idi who said: “A man passed by the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who asked a man sitting by him, ‘What do you think of this man?’ He said, ‘He is one of the noblest of the

people. By Allaah, if he proposes marriage he deserves to be accepted and if he intercedes he deserves to have his intercession accepted.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said nothing. Then another man passed by and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked the man with him, 'What do you think of him?' The man said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, he is one of the poor Muslims. If he proposes marriage he does not deserve to be accepted, if he intercedes he does not deserve to have his intercession accepted, and if he speaks he does not deserve to be heard. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'This man is better than an earth full of men like the other man.'" (*al-Fath*, 6447).

According to a report narrated by Ibn Maajah: a man passed by the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said (to his Companions), "What do you think of this man?" They said, "We think that he is one of the noblest of people. If he proposes marriage he deserves to be accepted, if he intercedes he deserves to have his intercession accepted, and if he speaks he deserves to be heard." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said nothing. Another man passed by and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked, "What do you think of this man?" They said, "By Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah, he is one of the poor Muslims. If he proposes marriage he does not deserve to be accepted, if he intercedes, he does not deserve to have his intercession accepted, and if he speaks he does not deserve to be heard." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "This man is better than an earth full of men like the other one." (*Sunan Ibn Maajah*, 'Abd al-Baaqi edn., no. 4120)

5 - Dealing with mistakes by repeatedly reminding people to fear Allaah

Jundub ibn 'Abd-Allaah al-Bajali reported that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent a group of Muslims to fight some *mushrikeen*, and they met in battle. One of the mushrikeen was ambushing individual Muslims and killing them. One of the Muslims wanted to catch him out and kill him. [Jundub said:] "We used to think that that man was Usaamah ibn Zayd. When he raised his sword, the *mushrik* said '*La ilaaha ill-Allaah*,' but he [Usaamah] killed him. A messenger came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and reported to him about what had happened in the battle. When he told him about what had happened to the mushrik who said *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent for Usaamah and asked him, 'Why did you kill him?' He said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, he had caused much grief to the Muslims, he killed So-and-so and So-and-so,' – and he named a number of people – 'I attacked him and when he saw the sword he said *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'And then you killed him?' Usaamah said, 'Yes.' He said, 'What will you do when *Laa illaha ill-Allaah* comes on the Day of Resurrection?' He said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, pray for forgiveness for me.'" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) simply said, "What will you do when *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah* comes on the Day

of Resurrection?”; he did not say any more than that. (Reported by Muslim, ‘Abd al-Baaqi edn., no. 97).

According to a report narrated by Usaamah ibn Zayd, he said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent us out on a military campaign and we reached al-Haraqaat near Juhaynah in the morning. [During the battle] I caught a man and he said, ‘*Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*,’ but I stabbed him. Then I felt bad about that, and I mentioned it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, ‘He said *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah* and you killed him?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah, he only said it because he was afraid of my weapon.’ He said, ‘How can you know what is in his heart? How can you be sure whether he was sincere or not?’ He kept repeating this until I wished that I had not become Muslim until that day [because embracing Islam wipes out all sins that came before - Translator].” (Reported by Muslim, no. 69)

One issue that may be included under the heading of reminders is reminding people about the power of Allaah. An example of this follows:

> Muslim (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that Abu Mas’ood al-Badri said: “I was beating a slave of mine with a whip, and I heard a voice behind me saying, ‘Listen Abu Mas’ood!’ but I did not pay any attention to the voice because I was so angry. When the voice got nearer to me, I realized that it was the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he was saying, ‘Listen Abu Mas’ood, listen Abu Mas’ood!’ I dropped the whip from my hand (according to another report: the whip fell from my hand out of respect for him). He said, ‘Listen Abu Mas’ood, Allaah has more power over you than you have over this slave.’ I said, ‘I will never hit a slave again.’” According to another report he said: “I said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah, he is free for the sake of Allaah.’ He said, ‘If you did not do this, the Fire of Hell would blow in your face, or the Fire would touch you.’”
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> According to another report also narrated by Muslim, “the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Certainly Allaah has more power over you than you have over him.’ So he freed him.” (*Saheeh Muslim,* no. 1659)
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> Abu Mas’ood al-Ansaari said: “I was beating a slave of mine when I heard someone saying from behind me, ‘Listen, Abu Mas’ood, listen, Abu Mas’ood.’ I turned around and saw that it was the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said, ‘Allaah has more power over you than you have over him.’… I never beat any slave of mine after that.” (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 1948. Abu ‘Eesa said, this is a hasan saheeh hadeeth).

6 - Showing compassion to the one who is making a mistake

This applies in the case of those who deserve compassion, who feel remorse and show that they have repented, as is sometimes the case when people come to ask questions and find out, as in the following story:

Ibn 'Abbaas reported that a man who had divorced his wife by *zihaar* and then had intercourse with her came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, I divorced my wife by zihaar then I had intercourse with her before I offered *kafaarah* (expiation)." He said, "What made you do that, may Allaah have mercy on you?" He said, "I saw her anklets in the moonlight." He said, "Then do not go near her until you have done that which Allaah commanded you to do." (Abu 'Eesa said, this is a hasan ghareeb saheeh hadeeth. *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 1199)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "Whilst we were sitting with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man came to him and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I am doomed!' He said, 'What is the matter with you?' He said, 'I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Are you able to set a slave free?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Can you fast for two consecutive months?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Do you have the wherewithal to feed sixty poor persons?' He said, 'No.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said nothing more about the matter for a while, and whilst we were sitting there like that, a large basket full of dates was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said, 'Where is the one who was asking?' The man said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take this and give it in charity.' The man said, 'Who is poorer than me, O Messenger of Allaah? By Allaah, there is no family in Madeenah poorer than mine.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) smiled until his eyeteeth were visible, then he said, 'Feed your family with it.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 1936).

This person who had made a mistake and came to ask about it was not joking or taking the matter lightly. He felt remorseful and guilty, as is clear from his saying "I am doomed." For this reason, he deserved pity and compassion. The report narrated by Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) makes the man's state even clearer:

Abu Hurayrah reported that a Bedouin came, hitting his cheeks and tearing out his hair, and saying, "I am sure that I am doomed!" The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him, "What makes you doomed?" He said, "I had intercourse with my wife during Ramadaan." He said, "Can you free a slave?' He said, "No." He said, "Can you fast for two consecutive months?" He said, "No." He said, "Can you feed sixty poor persons?" He said, "No," and mentioned how poor he was. A large basket containing fifteen *saa'* of dates was brought to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Where is that man? … Feed the poor with this." He said, "O Messenger of Allaah, there is no one in Madeenah who is poorer than my family." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) smiled until his

eyeteeth were visible and said, "Feed your family." (*Al-Musnad*, 2/516. *Al-Fath al-Rabaani*, 10/89)

7- Not hastening to tell someone he is wrong

Something happened to 'Umar which he himself told about: "I heard Hishaam ibn Hakeem ibn Hizaam reciting *Soorat al-Furqaan* during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). I listened to his recitation, and he was reciting it differently to the way that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to recite it. I nearly interrupted his prayer, but I waited until he had said the salaam, then I grabbed him by his cloak and said, 'Who taught you to recite this soorah I heard you reciting?' He said, 'The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught me to recite it.' I said, 'You are lying! The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught me to recite it differently.' I took him to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, 'I heard him reciting *Soorat al-Furqaan* differently than the way you taught me to recite it.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Let him go. Recite, O Hishaam.' He recited it as I had heard him recite it. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'This is how it was revealed.' Then he said, 'Recite, O 'Umar.' So I recited it as he had taught me. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'This is how it was revealed. This Qur'an was revealed with seven ways of recitation, so recite it in the way that is easiest for you.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, 4992).

Among the educational methods we learn from this story are the following:

- Telling each one to recite in front of the other and approving their recitation was more effective in confirming that both were correct and neither was wrong.
- When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told 'Umar to let go of Hishaam, this was preparing both parties to listen in a calm manner. This was an indication that 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) had been too hasty.
- A person who is seeking knowledge should not be too hasty to condemn any opinion that differs from that with which he is familiar; he should first be sure of what he is saying, because that opinion may turn out to be a valid scholarly opinion.

Another relevant point is that one should not hasten to punish someone who makes a mistake, as we see in the following story:

Al-Nisaa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from 'Abbaad ibn Sharhabeel (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: "I came with my (paternal) uncles to Madeenah, and we entered one of the gardens of the city. I rubbed some of the

wheat, and the owner of the garden came and took my cloak and hit me. I came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asking for his help. He sent for that man and they brought him to him. He said to him, 'What made you do that?' He said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, he went into my garden and took some of my wheat and rubbed it.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'You did not teach him if it was the matter of him not knowing, and you did not feed him if it was the matter of him being hungry. Give him back his cloak.' And the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ordered that I should be given a *wasq* or half a *wasq* (measure of wheat)." (Al-Nisaa'i, *al-Mujtabaa*, *Kitaab Aadaab al-Qudaat*, *Baab al-Isti'daa*'; *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 4999).

From this story we learn that we should find out the circumstances of the one who is making a mistake or acting in an aggressive manner, so that we may know the right way to deal with him.

We may also note that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not punish the owner of the garden, because he was in the right, but he had handled the matter wrong. He pointed out to him that the way he had dealt with someone who knew not better was inappropriate in such circumstances, then he taught him how to handle the matter properly, and told him to give back the garment he had taken from the hungry man.

8 - Remaining calm when dealing with people's mistakes

- especially when being too harsh could make matters worse and do more harm than good. We can learn this from looking at how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) dealt with the mistake made by the Bedouin who urinated in the mosque, as was reported by Anas ibn Maalik, who said: "Whilst we were in the mosque with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a Bedouin came and stood urinating in the mosque. The Companions of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Stop it! Stop it!' But the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Do not interrupt him; leave him alone.' So they left him until he had finished urinating, then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called him and said to him, 'In these mosques it is not right to do anything like urinating or defecating; they are only for remembering Allaah, praying and reading Qur'aan,' or words to that effect. Then he commanded a man who was there to bring a bucket of water and throw it over the (urine), and he did so." (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 285).

The principle which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) followed in dealing with this mistake was to treat the man gently, not to be harsh with him. Al-Bukhaari reported from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "A Bedouin urinated in the mosque, and the people got up to sort him out. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to them, 'Leave him alone, and throw a bucket of water over it. You have been sent to make things easy for people, not to make things hard.'" (*Fath*, 6128).

The Sahaabah, may Allaah be pleased with them, were very keen to denounce the bad thing they had seen and to keep their mosque clean and pure, as is indicated in the various reports of this hadeeth, which describe them as shouting at him, getting up to sort him out, rebuking him and hastening to deal with him, or telling him to "Stop it!" (*Jaami' al-Usool*, 7/83-87). But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was thinking of the likely consequences of the two options – stopping him or leaving him alone. If they tried to stop him, forcing a man to suppress his urination could do him harm, and if he was unable to stop but moved away because he was afraid of them, the impurity would be spread over a wider area of the mosque and on the man's body and clothing. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had the farsightedness to see that leaving the man alone until he had finished urinating was the lesser of two evils, especially since the man had already started doing it, and it was a problem that they would be able to do something about by cleaning it afterwards. So he told his companions to leave him alone and not to interrupt him. He told them to leave him alone because this was in the better interests of all and would ward off a worse evil by putting up with the lesser evil.

It was also reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked the man the reason for his action. Al-Tabaraani reported in *al-Kabeer* that Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and pledged allegiance to him in the mosque. Then he went away and started to urinate. The people wanted to stop him, but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Do not stop a man when he is urinating.' Then he asked him, 'Are you not a Muslim?' He said, 'Of course.' He said, 'What made you urinate in our mosque?' He said, 'By the One Who sent you with the truth, I thought it was just like any other place so I urinated in it.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called for a bucket of water and poured it over the urine." (Reported by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*, no. 11552, vol. 11, p.220. Al-Haythami said in *al-Majma'*: its men are the men of saheeh, 2/10).

This wise manner of dealing with the problem had a far-reaching effect on the Bedouin, as is clear from his reaction. Ibn Maajah reported that Abu Hurayrah said: "A Bedouin entered the mosque where the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sitting, and said, 'O Allaah, forgive me and Muhammad, and do not forgive anyone else.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) smiled and said, 'You are narrowing something vast.' Then (the Bedouin) went away to the furthest part of the mosque, opened his legs, and began to urinate. After he had learnt better, the Bedouin said, 'He got up, may my mother and my father be sacrificed for him, he did not rebuke me or insult me. He just said, "We do not urinate in this mosque; it was only built for the remembrance of Allaah and for prayer." Then he called for a bucket of water and poured it over the urine.'" (*Sunan Ibn Maajah*, 'Abd al-Baaqi edn., 529; *Saheeh Ibn Maajah*, 428).

Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) mentioned in his commentary a number of things we learn from the hadeeth about the Bedouin, among which are the following:

- we should be gentle when dealing with one who is ignorant and teach him what he needs to know without rebuking him, so long as he is not acting out of stubbornness, especially if he is one who needs to be won over.
- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was kind and dealt nicely with him.
- The idea of taking precautions against impurity (*najaasah*) was well-established in the minds of the Sahaabah, which is why they hastened to denounce it in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) without first asking his permission. The idea of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil was also well-established in their minds.
- We should also hasten to remove anything objectionable when there is nothing to stop us from doing so, because when the man had finished urinating, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) issued instructions that the place should be cleaned with water.

9 - Explaining the seriousness of the mistake

Ibn 'Umar, Muhammad ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Aslam and Qutaadah reported (the following is compiled from their reports) that during the campaign of Tabook, a man said, "We have never seen anyone who loves food and tells lies more than our reciters, or anyone who is more cowardly on the battlefield" – referring to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his Companions. 'Awf ibn Maalik said, 'You are lying! You are a hypocrite, and I am going to tell the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).' 'Awf went to the Messenger of Allaah to tell him, but found that Qur'aan had already been revealed concerning it. That man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who was riding his camel, and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, we were only talking idly and joking, just to pass time on the journey." Ibn 'Umar said, "It is as if I can see him hanging onto the reins of the Prophet's camel, with the stones hitting his feet, saying, "We were only talking idly and joking," whilst the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was reciting (interpretation of the meaning), *'Say: Was it at Allaah and His aayaat (signs) and His Messenger that you were mocking?' [al-Tawbah 9:65]*, no more, no less."

Ibn Jareer reported that Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "During the campaign of Tabook a man said in a gathering, 'We have never seen anyone who loves food and tells lies more than our reciters, or anyone who is more cowardly on the battlefield.' A man who was present said, 'You are lying! You are a hypocrite, and I am going to tell the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him),' and Qur'aan was revealed." 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar said, "I saw him hanging on to the reins of the Prophet's camel, kicking up the stones and saying, 'O Messenger of Allaah, we were only talking idly and joking,' and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was saying (interpretation of the meaning), *"Say: Was it at Allaah and His aayaat (signs) and His Messenger that you were mocking?" [al-Tawbah 9:65]*. (*Tafseer ibn Jareer al-Tabari*, 14/333, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, first edn., 1412. Its men are the men of saheeh, except Hishaam ibn Sa'd, from whom Muslim did not report except as a corroborating report, as in *al-Meezaan*. It was also reported by al-Tabari with his isnaad, and there

is a corroborating report with a hasan isnaad recorded by Ibn Haatim from the hadeeth of Ka'b ibn Maalik. *Saheeh al-Musnad min Asbaab al-Nuzool*, p.71).

10 - Explaining the harmful effects of the mistake

Abu Tha'labah al-Khashani said: "Whenever the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) broke his journey in a place, the people would disperse in the valleys and mountains. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Your dispersing in these valleys and mountains is from Shaytaan.' After that he never stopped anywhere but they all stayed close together, so much so that if a cloak was spread over them, it would cover them all." (Reported by Abu Dawood (may Allaah have mercy on him), in his *Sunan*, 2286; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, no. 2288). According to another report: "… until you would say that if you were to spread a cloth over them, it would cover them." (Ahmad, *al-Fath al-Rabbaani*, 14/44).

Here we may note the Prophet's concern for his Companions, which was the leader's concern for his troops. The army's dispersing when they made camp was a trick of the Shaytaan to make the Muslims scared and to lead the enemy to attack them. (See *'Awn al-Ma'bood*, 7/292). Dispersing in this manner would make it hard for one part of the army to come to the aid of another part. (See *Daleel al-Faaliheen*, 6/130).

We may also note that the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) obeyed him in whatever instructions they received from him.

Another example of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained how serious and dangerous a mistake was is to be seen in the hadeeth of al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer, according to which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Straighten your rows (for prayer), or Allaah will make you divided." (Reported by al-Bukhaari in his *Saheeh*, *Fath*, no. 717).

Muslim reported in his *Saheeh* from Sammaak ibn Harb, who said: "I heard al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer saying, 'The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to straighten our rows strictly, until he realized that we had got the message. One day he came out and was about to say takbeer when he noticed a man whose chest was sticking out. He said, "O slaves of Allaah, straighten your rows, or Allaah will make you divided."'" (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 436).

Al-Nisaa'i reported from Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Make your rows firm and close together, and make your necks in a straight line, for by the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, I see the *shayaateen* (devils) coming among your ranks as if they are small black sheep." (*al-Mujtabaa*, 2/92. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 785).

Explaining bad effects and negative consequences is very important when it comes to convincing people that they are making a mistake. The consequences may affect the person himself, or they may spread to other people. An example of the former

is the report narrated by Abu Dawood (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his *Sunan* from Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both), in which a man cursed the wind. Muslim said that a man's cloak was snatched away by the wind at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he cursed the wind. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Do not curse it, for it only does as it is commanded, and if a person curses something that does not deserve to be cursed, his curse will come back upon him." (Abu Dawood, no. 4908; *Saheeh Abi Dawood*, no. 4102). An example of the latter was narrated by al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his *Saheeh* from 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Abi Bakrah from his father, who said: "A man praised another man in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." According to a report narrated by Muslim: a man said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, there is no one other than the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who is better than him in such-and-such.' (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 3000). [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said to him, 'Woe to you! You have cut your companion's throat! You have cut your companion's throat!' several times, then he said, 'If any one of you insists on praising his brother, let him say, "I think so-and-so is such-and-such, and Allaah knows the exact truth, and I do not confirm anyone's good conduct before Allaah, but I think him to be such-and-such," if he knows that this is the case.'" (2662, *Kitaab al-Shahaadaat*). According to a report narrated by al-Bukhaari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Mihjan al-Aslami (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "… until when we were in the mosque, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw a man praying, prostrating and bowing. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to me, 'Who is this?' I started to praise him and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, this is so-and-so, and he is such-and-such.' (According to another report also in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, he said, 'This is so-and-so and he is one of the best people in Madeenah in prayer.') He said, 'Be quiet, lest he hear you and you destroy him.'" (*Saheeh al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 137; al-Albaani said, it is hasan).

Al-Bukhaari reported that Abu Moosa (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard a man praising another man and going to extremes in that. He said, 'You have destroyed him' or 'You have broken the man's back.'" (*Fath* 2663).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained that exaggeration when praising someone is a mistake which can have bad consequences. It may make the person who is praised feel proud, so that his heart is filled with arrogance and self-admiration, and he rests on his laurels or starts to show off because he enjoys the praise so much. This in turn may lead to his utimate doom, which is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) meant when he said, "You have destroyed him," or "You have cut the man's throat," or "You have broken the man's back."

Moreover, if a person goes to extremes in praising someone, and says something he is not certain of, or affirms something he could not possibly know, or maybe even tells lies or says something to please the person he is praising, this will be a disaster, especially if the person he is praising is an oppressor or wrongdoer. (See *al-Fath*, 10/478).

Generally speaking, it is not forbidden to praise people. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) praised some people in their presence. An important explanation of this topic is to be found in *Saheeh Muslim*, where there is a chapter entitled *Baab al-Nahy 'an al-Madh idhaa kaana feehi ifraat wa kheefa minhu fitnatan 'ala'l-mamdooh* (Chapter: Prohibition of praising others if it is exaggerated or if there is the danger of fitnah for the one who is praised). (*Kitaab al-Zuhd wa'l-Raqaa'iq, Saheeh Muslim*).

The person who sees himself as falling short will not be damaged by praise, and if he is praised he will not become arrogant, because he knows his own true nature. Some of the salaf said: "If a man is praised to his face, let him say: 'O Allaah, forgive me for what they do not know, do not hold me responsible for what they say, and make me better than what they think." (*Fath*, 10/478).

11 - Practical teaching of the one who is making a mistake

In many cases practical teaching is more effective than theoretical teaching. This is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did. Jubayr ibn Nufayr reported from his father that he came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who called for water, then said, "Do wudoo', O Abu Jubayr." Abu Jubayr started with his mouth, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Do not start with your mouth, O Abu Jubayr, for the kaafir starts with his mouth." Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called for water, and washed his hands until they were clean, then he rinsed his mouth and nose three times, washed his face three times, washed his right arm up to the elbow three times, and his left arm three times, wiped his head and washed his feet. (Reported by al-Bayhaqi in *al-Sunan*, 1/46; *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, no. 2820).

We may note here that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) deliberately put this Sahaabi off from doing an incorrect action by telling him that the kaafir starts with his mouth; the meaning may be that the kaafir does not wash his hands before putting them in the vessel (I was told this by Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez Ibn Baaz when I asked him about the interpretation of this hadeeth), and that this is not hygienic. And Allaah knows best.

12 - Offering a sound alternative

'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood said, "When we prayed with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), we used to say, "Peace be upon Allaah from His slaves, peace be upon so-and-so." (According to a report narrated by al-Nisaa'i, he said, "Pecae be upon Jibreel, peace be upon Mikaa'eel." *Al-Mujtabaa: Kitaab al-Tatbeeq, Baab Kayfa al-Tashahhud al-Awwal*. See also *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 1119). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Do not say, 'Peace be upon Allaah,' for Allaah is 'The Peace' (*al-Salaam*). But you should say, '*Al-Tahiyyaatu Lillaahi wa'l-salawaatu wa'l-tayyibaat, al-salaamu 'alayka ayyuha'l-Nabiyyu wa rahmat-Allaahi wa barakaatuhu, wa'l-salaamu 'alaynaa wa 'alaa 'ibaad-Illaah il-saaliheen*.' If you say this, it will include every slave of Allaah in heaven or between

heaven and earth. [Then say:] 'I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.' Then choose whichever du'aa' you like, and recite it." (al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 835).

Another report that deals with this topic was narrated by Anas (may Allaah be please with him), who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw some sputum in the direction of the qiblah and this upset him so much that his anger could be seen on his face. He stood up and removed it with his hand, then said, "When any one of you stands up to pray, he is talking to his Lord. His Lord is between him and the qiblah, so no one of you should spit in the direction of the qiblah; he should spit to his left or under his feet." Then he took the edge of his cloak, spat on it and rubbed part of it against another part and said, "Or do like this." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 405).

Another example was reported by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said: "Bilaal came to the Prophet with some good-quality dates, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked him, 'Where is this from?' Bilaal said, 'We had some poor-quality dates, and I sold two measures of those for one measure of these so that we could give them to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).' When he heard that, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Oh, oh! The essence of ribaa, the essence of ribaa! Do not do that. If you want to buy, sell your dates for something else, then buy it.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 2312). According to another report, one day a slave belonging to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) brought him some fresh dates, but the Prophet's dates were dry, so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Where did you get these dates from?' He said, 'We bought a measure of these for two measures of our dates.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Do not do this, because it is not right. Sell your dates first, then buy whatever dates you want.' (*Musnad Ahmad*, 3/67).

But in the case of some da'iyahs and people who seek to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, we notice that there is a shortcoming in their methods when they denounce some of the mistakes that people make. They only point out the mistakes and denounce them as haraam, without offering an alternative or explaining what must be done if one makes a mistake. It is known that the method of Islam is to offer alternatives to make up for any benefits that may have been gained through the haraam practice. When *zinaa* (fornication, adultery) was forbidden, marriage was allowed and prescribed; when *ribaa* (usury, interest) was forbidden, trading was allowed; when pork, dead meat and the flesh of every creature that has fangs or talons were forbidden, the meat of properly-slaughtered cattle and other animals was allowed, and so on. If a person does fall into error, Islam shows him the way out, through repentance and expiation, as is explained in the texts on *kafaaraat* (acts of expiation). So those who seek to call others to Islam must follow the sharee'ah in offering alternatives and finding acceptable ways out. (Another example of offering an alternative is to quote saheeh ahaadeeth which will replace da'eef and fabricated ahaadeeth).

It is worth pointing out here that offering alternatives is something that depends on what is possible. Sometimes a mistake may be something that has to be stopped, but there is no realistic alternative, either because the general situation is bad and people are far removed from the sharee'ah of Allaah, or because the one who is seeking to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil cannot remember what the alternative is – all he wants to do is denounce the mistake and change it, even if he has no alternative to offer. This happens a great deal in the case of financial dealings and investment organizations, which emerged in kaafir societies and were brought, complete with all their Islamically unacceptable features, to Muslim societies; the Muslims have shortcomings and weaknesses that prevent them from creating Islamic alternatives and applying them everywhere. So those shortcomings and weaknesses remain, even though the divine methodology contains alternatives and ways out that could alleviate the Muslims' hardships, and there are some who know this and some who do not.

13 - Guiding people to that which will prevent them from making mistakes

Abu Umaamah ibn Sahl ibn Haneef reported that his father told him that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out, and they travelled with him in the direction of Makkah, until they reached the ravine of al-Khazzaar near al-Juhfah. Sahl ibn Haneef did ghusl, and he was a white man with a handsome body and beautiful skin. 'Aamir ibn Rabee'ah, the brother of Banu 'Adiyy ibn Ka'b looked at him whilst he was doing ghusl and said, 'I have never seen anything like what I have seen today, not even the skin of the virgin who is hidden away!' [referring to the whiteness of his skin]. Sahl fell to the ground (he had an epileptic fit). The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came and it was said to him, 'Do you want to see Sahl? By Allaah, he cannot raise his head or wake up.' He asked, 'Whose fault is this?' They said, ' 'Aamir ibn Rabee'ah looked at him.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called 'Aamir and rebuked him angrily, and said, 'Why would any one of you kill his brother? If any one of you sees that his brother has something he likes, let him pray for blessing for him.' Then he said to him, 'Wash yourself to help him'. So he washed his face, his hands up to the elbows, his knees, the sides of his feet and inside his *izaar* (lower garment) in a vessel. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Pour that water over him.' So he poured the water over his head and back from behind, tilting the vessel, and Sahl went with the people and there was nothing wrong with him." (*Al-Musnad,* 3/486. Al-Haythami said, the men of Ahmad are the men of saheeh. *Al-Majma',* 5/107)

According to a report narrated by Maalik (may Allaah have mercy on him), Muhammad ibn Abi Umaamah ibn Sahl ibn Haneef said that he heard his father saying: "Abu Sahl ibn Haneef did ghusl in al-Kharraar and took off the garment he was wearing. 'Aamir ibn Rabee'ah was looking at him, and Sahl was a white man with beautiful skin. 'Aamir ibn Rabee'ah said to him, 'I have never seen anything like what I have seen today, not even the skin of the virgin!'. Sahl fell ill on the spot and became seriously ill. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came and was told, 'Sahl has fallen ill, and cannot go with you, O Messenger of Allaah.' Sahl told him what had happened with 'Aamir, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Why would any one of you kill his brother? You should have

asked for blessing for him. The (evil) eye is real. Do wudoo' to help him." So 'Aamir did wudoo', and Sahl went with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and there was nothing wrong with him. (*Al-Muwatta'*, hadeeth no. 1972).

What we learn from this story is:

- The teacher (i.e., the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) got angry with the one who caused harm to his Muslim brother.
- He explained the harmful effects of the mistake and that it could lead to death.
- He pointed the way to that which would prevent harm befalling a Muslim.

14 - Not confronting people directly with their mistakes and addressing the issue in general terms may be sufficient

Anas ibn Maalik said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'What is the matter with some people who raise their gaze to the heavens whilst they are praying?' He spoke so harshly about them that he said, 'They should stop doing that, or else Allaah will take away their sight.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, hadeeth no. 750).

When 'Aa'ishah wanted to buy a slave-woman whose name was Bareerah, her owners refused to sell her except with the condition that she would still be connected to them. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) found out about this, he stood up to address the people, praised and thanked Allaah, then said, "What is wrong with men who impose conditions which are not mentioned in the Book of Allaah? There is no condition that is not mentioned in the Book of Allaah but it is invalid, even if there were one hundred such conditions. The decree of Allaah is more true, the conditions laid down by Allaah are more binding, and *wala'* (connection, loyalty, allegiance) is to the one who sets the slave free." (Reported by al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) in numerous places in his *Saheeh*. See *Fath*, 5636).

'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did something and made it permissible, but some people felt that they were above doing that. News of this reached the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), so he addressed the people. He praised and thanked Allaah, then he said, 'What is the matter with people who think themselves above doing the things that I do? By Allaah, I know more about Allaah than they do, and I fear Him more than they do.'" (*Fath*, 6101).

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw sputum in the qiblah of the mosque, so he turned to the people and said, "What is wrong with one of you that he stands facing his Lord and spits in front of Him? Would any of you like someone to face him and spit in his face? If any one of you wants to spit, let him spit towards his left, under his feet, and if he cannot do

this, let him do this" – and al-Qaasim described how he spat on his garment and rubbed one part of it against another part. (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 550).

Al-Nisaa'i reported in his *Sunan* that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed Salaat al-Subh and recited *Soorat al-Room*, but got mixed up in his recitation. When he had finished praying, he said, "What is the matter with people who pray with us but do not purify themselves properly? Such people are the ones who make us get mixed up when we recite Qur'aan." (*Sunan al-Nisaa'i, al-Mujtabaa*, 2/156. Its men are thiqaat, but al-Haafiz said about 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Umayr that he was thiqah but his memory changed and he may have fabricated reports).

Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that Abu Rawh al-Kalaa'i said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led us in prayer and recited Soorat al-Room, but he got mixed up in part of the recitation. He said, 'The Shaytaan made us get mixed up in our recitation, because of some people who come to the prayer without wudoo'. When you come to pray, do wudoo' properly.'"

He also reported from Shu'bah from 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Umayr, who said: "I heard Shabeeb Abu Rawh narrating from a man from among the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed Salaat al-Subh and recited *Soorat al-Room*, and got mixed up, and he narrated (the same hadeeth)." (It was also reported from Zaa'idah and Sufyaan from 'Abd al-Malik. *Al-Musnad*, 3/473).

There are many examples, all of which indicate that the identity of the person who has made the mistake need not be exposed. This indirect approach and avoiding a direct confrontation has a number of benefits, including the following:

1. It avoids a negative reaction on the part of the person who has made the mistake, and prevents him from being tempted by the Shaytaan to avenge himself or defend himself.
2. It is more acceptable to people and is more effective.
3. It conceals the person's mistake in front of other people.
4. It increases the status of the educator and makes the advisor more beloved.

It must be pointed out that this method of using hints to convey a ruling to a person who has made a mistake, without exposing him and causing him embarrassment, is only to be used when what he has done is not known to the majority of people. If most of the people do know what he has done, and he knows that they know, then this method would be more in the nature of a rebuke and scolding, and exposing him in the most hurtful manner. The one who has made a mistake would most likely rather be confronted directly than be dealt with in this manner. Among the factors that can make a difference are: who is giving the advice, in the presence of whom the advice is being given, and whether the advice is given in a provocative and aggressive manner, or in a kindly and gentle manner.

Indirect methods of teaching people may be of benefit to the one who has made the mistake and to others, if they are used wisely.

15 - Provoking public opinion against the one who has made the mistake

This method is only to be used in very limited circumstances, when a great deal of thought has been given to the matter, to avoid any negative escalation of the situation. There follows an example of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used this method:

Abu Hurayrah said: "A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and complained to him about his neighbour. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Go and put up with him.' The man came back two or three times, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Go and put your belongings out in the street.' So he went and put his belongings out in the street. People started to ask him what was going on, so he told them, and the people started to curse (the neighbour), saying, 'May Allaah do such-and-such to him.' Then the neighbour came to him and said, 'Put your stuff back, you will not see anything else from me that you dislike.'" (Reported by Abu Dawood, *Kitaab al-Adab, Baab fi Haqq al-Jiwaar*, no. 5153; *Saheeh Abi Dawood*, 4292).

This method has an opposite counterpart which is used in other circumstances to protect people from the public's harm, as will be explained below:

16 - Avoiding helping the Shaytaan against the one who is making a mistake

'Umar ibn al-Khattaab reported that at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), there was a man called 'Abd-Allaah whose nickname was Himaar (donkey), who used to make the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) laugh. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had him whipped for drinking – he was brought to him one day and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave orders that he should be whipped. One of the men present said, "O Allaah, curse him! How often has he been brought [to be punished because of drinking]!" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Do not curse him, for by Allaah, all I know of him is that he loves Allaah and His Messenger." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 6780).

Abu Hurayrah said: "A drunkard was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and he ordered that he should be beaten, so some of us hit him with our hands, others with shoes and garments. When he went away, a man said, 'May Allaah put him to shame!' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Do not be a help to the Shaytaan against your brother.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, 6781).

Abu Hurayrah also said: "A man who had been drinking was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and he said, 'Beat him.' Some of us hit him with our hands, others with shoes and clothes. When he went away, some of

the people said, 'May Allaah put you to shame!' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Do not speak like this. Do not help the Shaytaan against him.'" (Al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 6777)

According to another report: "Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to his Companions, 'Rebuke him.' So they turned to him and said, 'You did not think of Allaah, you did not fear Allaah, you did not feel ashamed before the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).' Then they let him go, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Say, "O Allaah, forgive him, O Allaah, have mercy on him"' and some of them added similar sentiments." (Abu Dawood, *Kitaab al-Hudood, Baab al-Hadd fi'l-Khamr*, no. 4478, 4/620. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Abi Dawood*, no. 3759).

According to another report: "When he went away, some of the people said, 'May Allaah put you to shame!' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Do not speak like this, do not help the Shaytaan against him. Say "May Allaah have mercy on you."'" (Reported by Ahmad, 2/300. Ahmad Shaakir said, its isnaad is saheeh. *Al-Musnad*, ed. by Ahmad Shaakir, no. 7973).

What we learn from all of these reports is that if the Muslim falls into sin, he is still basically a Muslim and still basically loves Allaah and His Messenger, and this should not be denied. It is not permitted to pray against him in a manner that helps the Shaytaan against him; rather we should pray for him and ask Allaah to guide him, forgive him and have mercy on him.

17 - Asking the person to stop doing the wrong action

It is very important to make the person stop the wrong deed so that it does not get any worse and so that there is no delay in the denunciation of evil.

'Umar reported that he said, "No, by my father." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Stop! Whoever swears by something other than Allaah, is guilty of shirk." (Reported by Imaam Ahmad, 1/47. Ahmad Shaakir said, its isnaad is saheeh. No. 329)

Abu Dawood reported in his *Sunan* that 'Abd-Allaah ibn Busr (may Allaah be pleased with him) said, "A man came stepping over the necks on the people (in the mosque) one Friday, whilst the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was delivering the khutbah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Sit down! You are causing a disturbance.'"

Al-Tirmidhi reported that Ibn 'Umar said: "A man burped in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said, 'Keep your burps away from us! The ones who fill their stomachs most in this world, will be the ones who remain hungry longest on the Day of Resurrection. (Abu 'Eesa said, this is a ghareeb hasan hadeeth with this isnaad. *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 2478; *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, no. 343.)

These ahaadeeth show a direct request to the person who is making the mistake to stop what he is doing.

18 - Explaining to the person who is making a mistake how to put things right

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did this in a number of ways, including the following:

- Drawing an individual's attention to his mistake so that he could put it right himself.

An example of this is the report narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said that he was with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and "the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) entered and saw a man sitting in the middle of the mosque, clasping his fingers together and talking to himself. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gestured towards him, but he did not notice. So he turned to Abu Sa'eed and said, 'If one of you is praying, he should not clasp his fingers together, because this clasping comes from the Shaytaan, and you are in a state of prayer so long as you are still in the mosque, until you go out.'" (Reported by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, 3/54. Al-Haythami said in *al-Majma'* (2/25): its isnaad is hasan).

- Asking the person to do something again, correctly, if this is possible.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that a man entered the mosque whilst the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sitting in a far corner. He prayed, then he came and greeted him with salaam. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "*Wa 'alayka al-salaam*, go back and pray, because you have not prayed." So he went back and prayed, then he came back and greeted the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who said, "*Wa 'alayka al-salaam*, go back and pray, because you have not prayed." On the second occasion, or subsequently, the man said, "Teach me, O Messenger of Allaah." He said, "When you stand up to pray, do wudoo' properly, then face the qiblah and say Takbeer ('*Allaahu akbar'*). Then recite whatever is easy for you of Qur'aan, then bow until you are at ease in rukoo', then stand up until your back is completely straight. Then prostrate until you are at ease in sujood, then sit up until you are at ease in your sitting, then prostrate again until you are at ease in your sujood, then sit up again until you are at ease in your sitting. Do this in all your prayers." (Reported by all; this version reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 6251).

We should note that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pay attention to the actions of the people around him so that he could teach them. According to a report narrated by al-Nisaa'i: "A man entered the mosque and prayed, whilst the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was watching him and we did not realize. When he finished, he turned and greeted the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who told him, 'Go back and pray, for you have not prayed'…" (2/193 *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 1008).

Among the qualities of the educator is that he should be aware of the actions of those who are with him.

1. It is a part of educational wisdom to ask a person who has made a mistake to re-do his action, so that he can notice his mistake and put it right himself, especially when it is an obvious mistake that does not befit him. He may have done it out of forgetfulness, so this will remind him.
2. If the person who has made a mistake does not realize it, it must be pointed out and explained to him.
3. Giving information to a person who is interested and has asked about it himself is more effective and is more likely to be remembered than handing it out to someone who has not made any such enquiries.

The methods of teaching are many, and the educator can choose whichever are best suited in any given circumstances.

Another example of asking a person to repeat his action correctly is given by Muslim (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his *Saheeh*, where he reports that Jaabir said: "'Umar ibn al-Khattab told me that a man did wudoo', but missed an area on his foot the size of a fingernail. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw him and said, 'Go back and do your wudoo' properly.' So he went and did it again, then he prayed." (*Saheeh Muslim,* 243).

A third example was narrated by al-Tirmidhi (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his *Sunan* from Kildah ibn Hanbal, who said that Safwaan ibn Umayyah sent him with some milk, yoghurt and *daghaabees* [an edible plant] to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was at the top of the valley. He said, "I entered upon him, and I did not greet him with salaam or ask permission to enter, so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Go out and say "*Al-salaamu 'alaykum*, may I enter?"'" (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2710. Al-Tirmidhi said, a ghareeb hasan hadeeth. The hadeeth is also in *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 2180).

- Asking the person who has made the mistake to correct it as much as he can.

Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on it) reported from Ibn 'Abbaas that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "No man should be alone with a woman unless he is a mahram (close blood relative to whom marriage is permanently forbidden)." A man stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, my wife has gone out for Hajj and I have signed up for such-and-such a military campaign." He said, "Go back and do Hajj with your wife." (*al-Fath,* 5233).

- Putting right the consequences of the mistake

Al-Nisaa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported in his *Sunan* from 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr that a man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, "I have come to pledge allegiance to you and to make hijrah (migration)

to you. I have left my parents weeping." He said, "Go back to them and make them smile as you made them weep." (*Al-Majmaa* 7/143. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, no. 3881).

- Offering *kafaarah* (expiation) for the mistake

If some mistakes cannot be corrected or reversed, then there are other ways offered by Islam for wiping out their effects. One of these ways is *kafaaraat* or acts of expiation, of which there are many types, such as *kafaarat al-yameen* (expiation for swearing an unfulfilled oath), and expiation for *zihaar* (a jaahili form of divorce in which one says to one's wife "You are to me as my mother's back"), manslaughter, having intercourse during the day in Ramadaan, and so on.

19 - Denouncing only the mistake whilst accepting the rest

It may be the case that not all of what a person says or does is wrong, so it is wise to limit our denunciation only to that which is wrong, and not to generalize by condemning everything that is said or done as being wrong. This is indicated in the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his *Saheeh* from al-Rubay' bint Mu'awwadh ibn 'Afraa', who said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came and entered, and sat down on my bed the way you sat down. Some young girls of ours began beating on the *daff* (hand-drum) and singing songs eulogizing those of our forefathers who had been killed at Badr. Then one of them said, 'Among us there is a Prophet who knows the future.' He [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said: 'Do not say that; say what you were saying before.'" (*Fath*, 5147). According to a report narrated by al-Tirmidhi: "… The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to her: 'Do not say this; say what you were saying before.'" (Abu 'Eesa said: this is a saheeh hasan hadeeth. *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Shaakir edn., 1090). According to a report narrated by Ibn Maajah, he said: "Do not say this; no one knows the future except Allaah." (*Sunan Ibn Maajah*, 'Abd al-Baaqi edn., no. 1879. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, no. 1539).

There is no doubt that this kind of treatment makes the person feel that the one who is striving to point out mistakes and correct them is fair and just, and this makes him more likely to accept his advice. This is in contrast to some of those who want to denounce errors, but get so angry with the mistake committed that they go to extremes in their denunciation and condemn everything done and said by the one who has made the mistake, good and bad alike. This makes the person reject what they say and refuse to follow their advice.

In some cases, the mistake consists not of the words themselves, but the occasion or context in which they are uttered. For example, when somebody dies, one person may say, "*Al-Faatihah*," and everyone present will recite it. They believe that there is nothing wrong with this because what they are reciting is Qur'aan, not words of kufr. It has to be explained to them that what is wrong with this action is thinking that we should recite *al-Faatihah* on such occasions as an act of worship without any shar'i evidence for doing so, which is the essence of bid'ah. This is what Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with

him) pointed out to a man who sneezed beside him and said, "*Al-hamdu Lillaahi wa'l-salaam 'ala Rasool- Illaah* (Praise be to Allaah and peace be upon the Messenger of Allaah)." Ibn 'Umar said, "I could say '*Al-hamdu Lillaahi wa'l-salaam 'ala Rasool-Illaah*', but this is not how the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us. He taught us to say '*Al-hamdu Lillaahi 'ala kulli haal* (Praise be to Allaah whatever the circumstances)." (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 2738).

20 - Restoring rights and preserving positions

Muslim reported that 'Awf ibn Maalik said: "A man of Humayr killed one of the enemy and wanted to take his possessions as booty, but Khaalid ibn al-Waleed, who was in charge of the campaign, prevented him from doing so. 'Awf ibn Maalik came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and told him about it. He asked Khaalid, 'What stopped you from giving him his booty?' Khaalid said, 'I thought it was too much, O Messenger of Allaah.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Give it to him.' Then Khaalid passed by 'Awf, who pulled his cloak and said, 'Did I not do what I told you I would do with regard to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard him and got angry, and said, 'Do not give it to him, O Khaalid! Do not give it to him, O Khaalid! Why do you not leave my commanders alone? The likeness of you and them is that of a man who is asked to take care of camels or sheep, so he takes care of them, then when it is time for them to drink, he takes them to a trough and they start to drink, and they drink the clean water and leave the dregs behind. You take the clean water and leave the dregs for them [the commanders].'" (*Muslim bi Sharh al-Nawawi*, 12/64)

Imaam Ahmad transmitted a more complete version of this report from 'Awf ibn Maalik al-Ashja'i, who said: "We went out on a military campaign on the border of Syria, and Khaalid ibn al-Waleed was appointed as our commander. A man belonging to Humayr came and joined our band, and he had nothing but a sword, no other weapon. One of the Muslims slaughtered a camel and that man kept trying to snatch something until he managed to grab a piece of skin the shape of a shield. He spread it on the ground and cured it until it was dry, then he made a handle for it, like a shield. We met with the enemy, who were a mixed group of Romans and Arabs from (the tribe of) Qudaa'ah. They fought us fiercely. Among them was a Roman on a palomino horse with a golden-coloured saddle and a gold-plated belt, and a sword of similar material. He started attacking and challenging the people, and that Madadi man kept dodging around the Roman until he approached him from behind and struck the horse's hamstring with his sword. The Roman fell off, and the man followed that with a blow from his sword that killed him. When Allaah granted them victory, the man came asking about the booty, and the people bore witness that he had killed [that Roman], so Khaalid gave him some of the booty and withheld the rest. When he came back to 'Awf's band, he told him about it, and 'Awf said, 'Go back to him and let him give you the rest.' So he went back, but [Khaalid] refused to give it to him. 'Awf went to Khaalid and said, 'Do you not know that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ruled that the booty should go to the one who kills?' He said, 'Of course.' He said, 'So what is

stopping you from giving him his booty?' He said, 'I thought it was too much to give to him.' 'Awf said, 'When I see the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) I am going to tell him about this.' When he came to Madeenah, 'Awf sent the man and he complained to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called Khaalid, whilst 'Awf was sitting there, and said: 'O Khaalid, what stopped you from giving this man his spoils of war?' He said, 'I thought it was too much for him, O Messenger of Allaah.' [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said, 'Give it to him.' [Khaalid] passed by 'Awf, and 'Awf pulled on his cloak and said, 'Wasn't it enough for you what I told you about the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard him and got angry, and said, 'Do not give it to him, O Khaalid. Why do you not leave my commanders alone? The likeness of you and them is that of a man who is asked to take care of camels or sheep, so he takes care of them, then when it is time for them to drink, he takes them to a trough and they start to drink, and they drink the clean water and leave the dregs behind. You take the clean water and leave the dregs for them [the commanders].'"

We may note here that when Khaalid made a mistake in his decision (ijtihaad) to withhold the large amount of booty from the killer, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded that the matter should be put right by giving the booty to its rightful owner, but he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got angry when he heard 'Awf (may Allaah be pleased with him) making insinuations about Khaalid and poking fun at him by saying, "Did I not do what I told you I would do with regard to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?" and pulling on Khaalid's cloak when he walked past him, so he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Do not give it to him, O Khaalid." This was for the purpose of reinstating and reinforcing the position of the commander and leader, because upholding the leader's position in front of the people serves an obvious purpose.

But the following question may arise: If the killer had the right to the booty, how could he deny it to him? Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) answered this query with two possible outcomes:

Either he gave the booty to the man later on, and he delayed it as a punishment to him and to 'Awf for saying what they said to Khaalid (may Allaah be pleased with him) and showing disrespect to the commander and the one who had appointed him; or the one who had the right to take it gave it up willingly and donated it for the Muslims, and the point of this was to make Khaalid (may Allaah be pleased with him) feel better for the purpose of upholding the position of leaders. (*Al-Fath al-Rabbaani*, 14/8 4)

Further evidence concerning restoration of the position of the person who has been wronged comes in the report narrated in the *Musnad* of Imaam Ahmad from Abu Tufayl 'Aamir ibn Waathilah, that a man passed by a group of people and greeted them with salaam, and they returned the greeting, but when he had gone, one of them said, "By Allaah, I hate this man for the sake of Allaah." The others present said, "What a bad thing to say! By Allaah, we are going to tell him. Get up, O So-and-So – one of the

people present – and tell him." So their messenger caught up with him and told him what had been said. The man went to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, I passed by a group of Muslims among whom was So-and-So. I greeted them with salaam and they returned the greeting, and when I had left, one of them caught up with me and told me that So-and-So had said, 'By Allaah, I hate this man for the sake of Allaah.' Call him and ask him why he hates me." So the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called him and asked him about what the man had said. He admitted it and said, "I did say that, O Messenger of Allaah." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Why do you hate him?" He said, "I am his neighbour and I know him very well. By Allaah, I have never seen him pray any prayer except the prescribed prayer which everyone, good and bad alike, prays." The man said, "Ask him, O Messenger of Allaah, has he ever seen me delaying any prayer, or not doing wudoo' properly, or not doing rukoo' and sujood properly?" He said, "No," then he said, "By Allaah, I have never seen him fast at all except this month which everyone, good and bad alike, fasts." He said, "O Messenger of Allaah, has he ever seen me breaking my fast during [that month], or doing anything to invalidate my fast?" The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked him, and he said, "No," then he said, "By Allaah, I have never seen him giving to any needy person or spending any of his wealth for the sake of Allaah except for this charity [zakaah] which everyone, good and bad alike, gives." He said, "Ask him, O Messenger of Allaah, have I ever withheld any part of the zakaah or kept it back from the one who asked for it?" The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked him and he said, "No." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "I don't know, maybe he is better than you."

Immediately following this report in *al-Musnad*, it says the following: "Ya'qoob told us, my father told us from Ibn Shihaab, that he was told that a man at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) passed by a group of people. He did not mention Abu al-Tufayl. Abu 'Abd-Allaah said: I heard that Ibraaheem ibn Sa'd reported this hadeeth from his memory and said concerning Abu al-Tufayl that his son Ya'qoob narrated from his father, but he did not mention Abu al-Tufayl. I think he is mistaken, and the report of Ya'qoob is saheeh, And Allaah knows best." (*Al-Musnad,* 5/455. Al-Haythami said: the men of Ahmad are thiqaat. *Athbaat al-Majma',* 1/291).

It is very important to maintain a person's position after he has repented from his mistake and set matters straight, so that he will remain on the right path and live a normal life among people. It was reported in the story of the Makhzoomi woman who had her hand cut off (for stealing), which was reported by 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), that "she repented properly later on, and she got married and used to come to me and I would tell the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon her) what she needed." (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 1688).

21 - Addressing both parties in cases where the blame is shared

In many cases, the blame is shared and the person who makes a mistake may himself have been wronged, but the blame is not to be shared equally. In this case both parties must be addressed and advised. There follows an example:

'Abd-Allaah ibn Abi Awfaa said: "'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn 'Awf complained about Khaalid ibn al-Waleed to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Do not upset any of those who were present at Badr, for even if you were to spend gold equal to the size of Uhud, your deeds would not equal theirs.' He said, 'They insulted me first, and I responded.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Do not upset Khaalid, for he is one of the swords of Allaah sent against the kuffaar.'" (Al-Haythami said: the men of al-Tabaraani are thiqaat. *Al-Majma'*, 9/349. See also *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* by al-Tabaraani, hadeeth no. 3801).

22 - Asking the person to forgive the one who wronged him

Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Arabs used to serve one another when they were travelling, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar had a man with them who was serving them. They fell asleep then woke up, and he had not prepared any food for them. One of them said to the other, 'This man sleeps too much.' (This is in *Tafseer Ibn Katheer,* Daar al-Sha'b edn. According to the version quoted by al-Albaani in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, no. 2608, …). They woke him up and said, 'Go to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and tell him that Abu Bakr and 'Umar send their salaams to you and are asking for food.' He (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) said: 'Send my salaams to them and tell them that they have already eaten.' They got worried, so they came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, we sent word to you asking for food, and you told us that we had already eaten? What have we eaten?' He said, 'The flesh of your brother. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, I can see his flesh between your teeth" – meaning the flesh of the one about whom they had backbitten.' They said, 'Ask for forgiveness for us.' He said, 'Let him ask for forgiveness for you.'" (*Al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, no. 2608. It was attributed to al-Kharaa'iti in *Masaawa' al-Akhlaaq* and to al-Diya' in *al-Mukhtaarah*. Ibn Katheer mentioned it in his tafseer of Soorat al-Hujuraat, 7/363, Dar al-Sha'b edn.)

23 - Reminding a person of the good qualities of the one whom he has wronged, so that he will regret what he has done and will apologize

This is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did in the situation that arose between Abu Bakr and 'Umar, may Allaah be pleased with them. Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported in his *Saheeh, Kitaab al-Tafseer*, that Abu'l-Darda' said: "There was a dispute between Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Abu Bakr made 'Umar angry, so he went away angry, and Abu Bakr followed him, asking him to seek forgiveness for him, but he did not do that, and he shut his door in his face. Abu Bakr turned around and went to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah

be upon him), and we were sitting with him. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'This companion of yours has gotten involved in a dispute.' Then 'Umar regretted what he had done, so he came, gave the greeting of salaam, and sat down by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He told the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) what had happened. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got angry, and Abu Bakr started to say, 'By Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah, I am more wrong.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Are you going to leave my companion alone? Are you going to leave my companion alone? I have told the people: I am the Messenger of Allaah to all of you, and you (all) said, "You are a liar," but Abu Bakr said, "You are telling the truth."'" (*Fath* 4640).

Al-Bukhaari also narrated this story in *Kitaab al-Manaaqib* (the Book of Virtues) in his *Saheeh*, from Abu'l-Darda', who said: "I was sitting with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when Abu Bakr came along, holding the hem of his garment up in such a way that his knees could be seen. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Your companion has gotten involved in a dispute.' [Abu Bakr] gave the greeting of salaam, then said: 'There is something between me and the son of al-Khattaab. I upset him, then I regretted it, and I asked him to forgive me, but he refused, so I have come to you.' He said, 'May Allaah forgive you, O Abu Bakr,' three times. Then 'Umar regretted (what he had done), so he came to Abu Bakr's house, asking, 'Is Abu Bakr there?' They said, 'No.' So he came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and signs of anger were so visible on the Prophet's face that Abu Bakr felt sorry. He knelt down and said. 'O Messenger of Allaah, by Allaah, I was more wrong,' twice. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Allaah sent me to all of you, and you (all) said, "He is a liar," but Abu Bakr said, "He is telling the truth", and helped me with his self and with his wealth. Are you going to leave my Companion alone?' He said this twice, and Abu Bakr was never hurt after that." (*Fath,* no. 3661).

<u>24 - Intervening to calm people down and put a stop to the fitnah (discord) between those who are making mistakes</u>

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did this on a number of occasions when fighting was about to break out among the Muslims, so he intervened, as was reported in the incident of the slander (*al-ifk*) against 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her). She said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood up that day and asked for someone to deal with 'Abd-Allaah ibn Ubayy for him, whilst he was on the minbar. He said, 'O Muslims! Who will deal with a man who I have heard is attacking me with regard to my family? By Allaah, I know nothing about my family but good, and they have mentioned a man about whom I know nothing but good, and he has never entered upon my family except with me.' Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh, the brother of Bani 'Abd al-Ashhal, stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I will deal with him for you. If he is from Aws, I will strike his neck [cut his head off], and if he is from among our brothers of Khazraj, tell us what to do, and we will do it.' Then a man of Khazraj stood up; Umm Hassaan was his cousin from the same clan, and he was

Sa'd ibn 'Ubaadah the leader of Khazraj. Before that he was known to be a righteous man, but on this occasion a spirit of tribalism took hold of him, and he said to Sa'd [ibn Mu'aadh], 'You are lying! By Allaah, you will not kill him and you will not be able to kill him. If he were one of your people, you would not like him to be killed!' Usayd ibn Hudayr, the cousin of Sa'd, stood up and said to Sa'd ibn 'Ubaadah: 'You are lying! By Allaah, we will kill him! You are a hypocrite defending the hypocrites!' The two parties of Aws and Khazraj got so angry that they nearly began to fight whilst the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was standing on the minbar. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) kept smoothing things over until they calmed down." (Agreed upon. *Fath*, 4141)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went to Bani 'Amr ibn 'Awf to reconcile between them, and stayed there for that purpose until the time for one of the congregational prayers came, as is reported in *al-Saheehayn* and in a report narrated by al-Nisaa'i. Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Saa'idi (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "A dispute arose between two parties among the Ansaar, to the point that they were throwing stones at one another. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went to reconcile between them, and the time for prayer came, so Bilaal called the Adhaan and waited for the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), but he did not come. So he made the iqaamah (call immediately preceding congregational prayer) and Abu Bakr, may Allaah be pleased with him) led the prayer…" (*Al-Mujtabaa, Kitaab Aadaab al-Qadaah*, 8/243). According to a report narrated by Ahmad, Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Saa'idi said: "Someone came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: 'Bani 'Amr ibn 'Awf are fighting and throwing stones at one another.' So the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out to them to reconcile between them…" (*Al-Musnad*, 5/338)

25 - Showing one's anger about a mistake

When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw or heard about a mistake, he would show his anger, especially if it had to do with matters of belief ('*aqeedah*). This includes indulging in disputes about *al-qadar* (divine decree) and the Qur'aan. In *Sunan Ibn Maajah* there is a report from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather, who said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out to his companions, who were disputing about *al-qadar*, and it was as if a pomegranate seed had burst on his face, i.e., his face was red with anger. He said, 'Is this what you were commanded to do? Is this what you were created for? Are you using some parts of the Qur'aan to contradict others? The nations before you were destroyed by this!' 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr said: 'I never felt happy about missing any gathering with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), but I was happy about missing that gathering.'" (Reported by Ibn Maajah, no. 85. He said in *al-Zawaa'id*: this is a saheeh isnaad and its men are thiqaat. It says in *Saheeh Ibn Maajah*: hasan saheeh. No. 69).

According to Ibn Abi 'Aasim in *Kitaab al-Sunnah*: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out to his Companions, and they were disputing about *al-qadar*, one quoting one aayah and another quoting another aayah. It

was as if a pomegranate seed had been thrown in his face [because it was red with anger]. He said, 'Is this what you were created for? Is this what you were ordered to do? Do not use parts of Allaah's book against other parts. Look at what you are commanded to do, and do it, and what you are forbidden to do, avoid it.'" (*Al-Sunnah* by Ibn Abi 'Aasim, edited by al-Albaani, no. 406. He said: its isnaad is hasan).

Another example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) becoming angry at the denial of one of the basic principles was what happened in the case of 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), with regard to sources. Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported in his *Musnad* from Jaabir ibn 'Abd-Allaah that 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with a book which he had got from some of the People of the Book. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got angry. He said, "Are you confused about it, O son of al-Khattaab? By the One in Whose hand is my soul, I have brought you [the Message] pure and white, so do not ask them about anything, lest they tell you something true and you reject it, or they tell you something false and you accept it. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if Moosa (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) were alive, he could not but follow me." (*Musnad Ahmad*, 3/387. Classed by al-Albaani as hasan because of corroborating reports in *al-Irwa'*, no. 1589).

The hadeeth was also narrated by al-Daarimi, may Allaah have mercy on him, from Jaabir, who said that 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with a copy of the Tawraat (Torah), and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, this is a copy of the Tawraat." [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] did not say anything. ['Umar] began to read it, and the face of the Messenger of Allaah changed [i.e., he was angry]. Abu Bakr said, "May your mother lose you! Do you not see the expression of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?" 'Umar looked at the face of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, "I seek refuge with Allaah from the anger of Allaah and the anger of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). We are content with Allaah as our Lord, with Islam as our religion and with Muhammad as our Prophet." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if Moosa were to appear among you and you followed him and left me, you would go astray from the straight path. If he had lived until the time of my Prophethood, he would have followed me." (*Sunan al-Daarimi*, no. 441, *al-Muqaddimah, Baab maa yutaqqaa min Tafseer Hadeeth al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) wa Qawli ghayrihi 'inda Qawlihi (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)*. The editor, 'Abd-Allaah Haashim Yamaani, said: it was also narrated by Ahmad with a hasan isnaad, and by Ibn Hibbaan with a saheeh isnaad).

Among the corroborating reports is the hadeeth of Abu'l-Darda', who said: "'Umar brought some pages of the Tawraat to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, (these are) some pages of the Tawraat which I took from a brother of mine from Bani Zurayq.' The face of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) changed, and 'Abd-Allaah ibn Zayd – the one who was shown the Adhaan in a dream – said: 'Have you gone mad? Do you not see [the expression] on the face of the Messenger of Allaah

(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?' 'Umar said: 'We are content with Allaah as our Lord, with Islam as our religion, with Muhammad as our Prophet and with the Qur'aan as our guide. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) relaxed and said: 'By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if Moosa were among you, and you followed him and left me, you would go far astray. You are my share among the nations and I am your share among the Prophets.'" (Al Haythami said in *al-Majma'*: It was reported by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*, and it includes Abu 'Aamir al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad al-Asadi, and I have not seen anyone giving his biography, but the rest of its men are mawthooq. *Al-Majma'* 1/174).

We may note from these reports that the educator (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) had support from the other people present when they noticed how his expression changed and took their stance based on what they saw. There is no doubt that this combination of events had a great impact on the person who was being reprimanded.

The process went through the following stages:

Firstly, the anger that welled up in the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), so that his expression changed even before he spoke.

Secondly, [Abu Bakr] al-Siddeeq and 'Abd-Allaah ibn Zayd noticed this and pointed it out to 'Umar.

Thirdly, 'Umar realized his mistake and hastened to put it right and to apologize for what he had done, seeking refuge with Allaah from the anger of Allaah and the anger of His Messenger, and reaffirming the basic principle of being content with Allaah, His Messenger and His Religion.

Fourthly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) relaxed and calmed down when 'Umar retracted and realized his mistake.

Fifthly, the Prophet's comment confirmed and reinforced this basic principle by reaffirming the obligation to follow the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and warning against taking any other source of guidance.

Another example of the Prophet's anger when he saw something objectionable was reported in *Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (may Allaah have mercy on him) from Anas ibn Maalik, who said that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw some spittle in the mosque in the direction of the qiblah, he was so upset that it was clearly visible on his face. He wiped it with his hand and said, "When one of you gets up to pray, he is talking to his Lord, or his Lord is between him and the qiblah, so he should not spit in the direction of the qiblah, but to his left or under his feet." Then he took the edge of his garment, spat on it and rubbed part of it against another part and said, "or he can do this." (*Fath*, 405).

An example of the Prophet's anger when he heard a mistake that led to wrongdoing was also reported by al-Bukhaari, from Abu Mas'ood al-Ansaari, who said: "A man came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I am going to go late to the prayer tomorrow because of so-and-so, who makes the prayer too long for us.' I never saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) more angry in his rebuking than on that day, when he said, 'O people! Some of you are putting others off. When any of you leads the people in prayer, let him keep it short, for among them are the elderly, the weak and those with pressing needs.'" (*Fath*, 7159).

Another example is for the mufti to show anger towards the person who is asking questions when he starts to nit-pick in a ridiculous fashion. Zayd ibn Khaalid al-Juhani (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and asked him about lost property that he finds. He said, 'Announce it for a year. Remember the description of its container and the string with which it is tied, and if someone comes and claims it, and describes it correctly, give it to him, otherwise, utilize it.' He said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, what about a lost sheep?' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'It is for you, for your brother (i.e., its owner), or for the wolf.' He said, 'What about a lost camel?' The face of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) became red (with anger), and he said, 'You have nothing to do with it. It has its feet, and access to water, and can eat trees.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 2436).

The educator may show anger in proportion to the mistake at the time when the mistake is made, or when he sees or hears it, in such a way that the anger may be seen in his face or recognized from his tone of voice. This is a sign that his heart is alert to wrongdoing and will not keep silent about it, so that the others present will feel afraid of making the same mistake. Speaking out when you are angry can have a greater impact than remaining silent and waiting until things have cooled down, because then the impact of your comments will be lost.

On the other hand, it may be wise to delay commenting on a regrettable incident or seriously mistaken words until all the people have been called together or until a time when they meet, because of the seriousness of what is involved or because there are not enough people around to understand and convey the information to others. There is nothing wrong with addressing an individual immediately and delaying general discussion of the matter until later. According to *Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, Abu Humayd al-Saa'idi reported that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) appointed someone (to collect the zakaah). When he had finished his work, he came and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, this is for you, and this is what was given to me as a gift." He said, "Why don't you sit in your parents' house and see whether anyone brings you a gift or not?" In the evening, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood up after the prayer, pronounced the Shahaadah and praised Allaah as He deserves to be praised, then he said, "What is wrong with an employee whom we appoint, then he comes to us and says, 'This is for you and this is what I was given as a gift"? Why does he not sit in his parents' house and see whether anyone

brings him a gift or not? By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, no one of you unlawfully withholds something from us, except he will come on the Day of Judgement carrying it around his neck: if it is a camel, he will bring it bellowing, if it is a cow he will bring it mooing, and if it is a sheep he will bring it bleating. I have conveyed (the message)." Abu Humayd added, "Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) raised his arm so high that we could see his armpit." (*Fath*, 6636)

26 - Turning away from the one who has made a mistake, and avoiding argument with him, in the hope that he may come back to the right way

Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allaah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to him and Faatimah's (peace be upon her, the daughter of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) one night and said to them, "Are you not coming to pray?" 'Ali said, "O Messenger of Allaah, our souls are in the hand of Allaah. If He wants to bring us back to life (from sleep), He will do so!" The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went away when 'Ali said that to him, and he did not respond to it at all, but 'Ali heard him as he was walking away, slapping his thigh and saying, " *'... But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.' [al-Kahf 18:54 – interpretation of the meaning]*." (The words of 'Ali could be understood in different ways. See *al-Fath*, 7347).

27 - Rebuking the one who has made a mistake

This is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did with Haatib (may Allaah be pleased with him) when he heard that he had sent word to the kuffaar of Quraysh, informing them of the Muslims' intention to head for Makkah to conquer it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked him, "What made you do that, O Haatib?" He said, "I believe in Allaah and His Messenger and I never changed, but I wanted to make some gesture towards them through which Allaah might protect my family and my wealth. All your other companions have someone there through whom Allaah will protect their families and their wealth." [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said: "He has spoken the truth, so do not say anything but good to him." 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab said, "But he has betrayed Allaah and Messenger and the believers! Let me strike his neck [cut off his head]!" [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said: "How do you know? Maybe Allaah looked at the people of Badr and said, 'Do what you like, for Paradise is guaranteed for you.'" Tears welled up in 'Umar's eyes and he said, "Allaah and His Messenger know best." (*Fath*, 6259)

There are a number of important educational points we learn from this story:

1 – The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) rebuked the Sahaabi who had make a serious mistake by asking him, "What made you do that?"

2 – Enquiring as to the reason that motivated him to make the mistake undoubtedly has an effect on the way in which he is treated.

3 – Those who have an excellent track record are not immune from committing major sins.

4 – The educator must be open-minded in dealing with his companions' mistakes so that they continue progressing on the straight path. The aim is to reform them, not alienate them.

5 – The educator must appreciate the moments of human weakness that may overcome some of those who are with him, and he should not be shocked by a serious mistake on the part of one who is advanced or senior.

6 – Defending one who deserves to be defended even though he has made a mistake.

7 – If a person who makes a mistake has a great deal of good works to his credit, this should be taken into account when evaluating the level of his mistake and dealing with it.

28 - Blaming the person who has made a mistake

An obvious mistake cannot be ignored; blame must be directed at the person who has made the mistake, and he must be rebuked from the outset, so that he will realize that he has made a mistake. Al-Bukhaari narrated in his *Saheeh* that 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "I had a she-camel from my share of the booty of Badr, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had given me another she-camel from the *khums*. When I wanted to marry Faatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), I made an appointment with a goldsmith from Banu Qaynuqaa' to go with me to Idhkhur. I wanted to sell him the two gold bracelets and use the money for my *waleemah* (wedding celebration). Whilst I was gathering together the saddles, sacks, ropes and other gear, my camels were sitting beside a room belonging to one of the Ansaar. After collecting the things I had to collect, I came back and found my camels with their backs cut open, their sides stabbed and their livers removed. I could hardly bear to look at this scene. I said, 'Who did this?' They said, 'Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib. He is in that house drinking with one of the Ansaar.' I went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and Zayd ibn Haarithah was with him. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) knew something was wrong from my expression. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'What is the matter with you?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I have never seen anything like today! Hamzah attacked my two she-camels and cut their backs open and stabbed them in their sides. He is in a house, drinking.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) called for his cloak and put it on, then he went walking, and Zayd ibn Haarithah and I followed him, until he reached the house where Hamzah was. He asked permission to enter, and they gave permission. They were drinking, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be

upon him) started to hurl blame at Hamzah for what he had done, but then he noticed that Hamzah was drunk and red-eyed. Hamzah looked at the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He looked up at his knees, then at his navel, then at his face, then he said, 'You are no more than a slave to my father.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) realized that he was drunk, so he turned on his heels and we went out with him." (*Fath*, no. 3091). This happened before drinking alcohol was forbidden.

29 - Shunning the one who has made a mistake

Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that Humayd said: "Al-Waleed came to me and a friend of mine and said, 'Come with me, for you are younger than me and you know more about hadeeth.' He took us to Bishr ibn 'Aasim. Abu'l-'Aaliyah said to him: 'Will you tell these two your hadeeth?' He said, ' 'Uqbah ibn Maalik told us, Abu'l-Nadr al-Laythi said, Bahz, who was one of his group, said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent an expedition to attack some people. A man drifted away from the people, and one of the (Muslim) expedition followed him with his sword unsheathed. The man who had wandered off said, "I am a Muslim," but the Muslim paid no attention to him, and struck him and killed him. Word of this reached the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he spoke out angrily against it. News of this reached the killer, and whilst the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was delivering a speech, the killer said, "O Messenger of Allaah, by Allaah he only said that to protect himself." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) turned away from him and the people around him, and continued with his speech. The man said again, "O Messenger of Allaah, he only said that to protect himself." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) again turned away from him and the people around him, and continued with his speech. The man did not put up with that; a third time he said, "O Messenger of Allaah, by Allaah he only said that to protect himself." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) turned to him, and it was clear from his expression how upset he was. He said, "Allaah scorns the one who kills a believer" three times.'" (*al-Musnad*, 5/289. See also *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, 2/309)

Al-Nisaa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that a man came from Najraan to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), wearing a ring of gold. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) turned away from him and said, "You have come to me with an ember from the Fire of Hell in your hand." (*Al-Mujtaba*, 8/170; *Saheeh Sunan al-Nisaa'i*, 4793). Ahmad reported a more detailed version of this from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri: a man came from Najraan to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) wearing a ring of gold. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) turned away from him and did not ask him about anything. The man went back to his wife and told her about it. She said, "There has to be a reason for that. Go back to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." So he went back, and threw away his ring and the garment he was wearing. When he asked permission to enter, it was given to him. He greeted the Messenger of Allaah

(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who returned the greeting. He said, "O Messenger of Allaah, you turned away from me when I came before." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "You came to me with a coal from the fire of Hell in your hand." He said, "O Messenger of Allaah, I came with a lot of coals." He had brought some suits of clothing from Bahrain. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "What you have brought is not going to help us in any way (with regard to the Hereafter). It is no more use than the rocks of al-Harrah, but they are luxuries of this world." The man said: "I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, explain this to your Companions, so that they do not think you were angry with me for some reason." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood up and explained this, and said that the problem had been with his gold ring." (*al-Musnad*, 3/14).

According to a report narrated by Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw one of his Companions wearing a ring of gold, and turned away from him. The Sahaabi threw it away and put on a ring of iron, and [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said, "This is evil, this is the jewellery of the people of Hell," so he threw it away and put on a ring of silver, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said nothing. (*al-Musnad*, 163. *Al-Musnad* edited by Ahmad Shaakir, no. 6518. He said its isnaad is saheeh).

30 - Boycotting the one who has made a mistake

This is one of the effective methods used by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) especially when a very serious mistake was made, because of the far-reaching effect that a boycott has on the person concerned. An example of this is what happened to Ka'b ibn Maalik and his two companions who stayed behind from the campaign of Tabook. After the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had ascertained that they had no valid excuse, and they had admitted it, as Ka'b said:

"The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade the Muslims to speak to any of the three of us who had stayed behind. So the people avoided us and their attitude towards us changed so that even the earth I was walking on looked different to what I had known. We stayed like that for fifty days. As for my two companions, they resigned themselves and stayed in their homes, weeping, but I was the youngest and the most determined, so I used to go out and attend the prayers with the Muslims and go around in the market places, and no one would speak to me. I would come to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) whilst he was in a gathering after prayer, and greet him with salaam, asking myself whether he had moved his lips in response or not. I would pray near him, stealing glances at him. When I would turn to pray, he would turn towards me, and when I would turn towards him, he would turn away from me. When the people's harshness had gone on too long for me, I went away and climbed over the wall of the garden of Abu Qutaadah, who was my cousin [son of my paternal uncle] and the dearest of people to me. I greeted him with salaam, but by Allaah he did not answer me. I said, 'O Abu Qutaadah, I ask you by Allaah, do you not know that I love Allaah and His Messenger?' He remained silent, so I

repeated what I had said, pleading with him, but he remained silent. I repeated it again, pleading with him, and he said, 'Allaah and His Messenger know best.' My eyes filled with tears and I turned away and went and climbed back over the wall…

When fifty nights had passed since the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had forbidden anyone to talk to us, after I had prayed Fajr on the morning of the fiftieth day, and I was on the roof of our house, whilst I was sitting as Allaah has described, with my own self straitened to me and the earth, vast as it is, straitened to me [cf. Al-Tawbah 9:118], I heard the sound of someone shouting from the mountain of Sal' at the top of his voice: 'O Ka'b ibn Maalik, rejoice!'" (*Fath*, 4418).

We learn many great lessons from this story, which should not be ignored in any way. We read about some of them in the scholars' commentaries on this story, as in *Zaad al-Ma'aad* and *Fath al-Baari*.

Another indication that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used this method was narrated by al-Tirmidhi from 'Aa'ishah, who said: "No behaviour was more hateful to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) than lying. If a man told lies in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), he would remain upset about it until he knew that he had repented from that." (Abu 'Eesa said: this is a hasan hadeeth. *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 1973).

According to a report narrated by Ahmad: " … he would remain upset with him…" (*al-Musnad*, 6/152)

According to another report: "If it happened that one of the members of his household told a lie, he would keep turning away from him until he repented." (Reported by al-Haakim. *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 4675).

It is clear from the reports mentioned above that turning away from the person who is making a mistake until he gives it up is an effective educational method, but in order for it to be effective, the person who is forsaking and turning away from the other must have some status in the eyes of the latter, otherwise it will not have a positive effect, and may even give the person something to be happy about.

31 - Praying against someone who stubbornly persists in making a mistake

Muslim (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that a man ate with his left hand in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said, "Eat with your right hand!" The man said, "I cannot" He said, "May you never be able to!" Nothing was stopping him except pride, and he never raised it to his mouth after that. (No. 2021).

According to a report narrated by Ahmad: "Iyaas ibn Salamah ibn al-Akwa' reported that his father told him: 'I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) telling a man called Bisr ibn Raa'i al-'Eer, whom he saw eating

with his left hand, to eat with his right hand. He said, 'I cannot.' He said, 'May you never be able to!' And his right hand never reached his mouth after that." (4/54)

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "This hadeeth shows that it is permissible to pray against the one who goes against a shar'i ruling for no good reason. It also demonstrates enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil in all matters, even in the matter of eating." (Sharh Saheeh Muslim, 13/192).

We may also note here that the du'aa' against him was not for something that would help the Shaytaan against him, it was for something that was more like a rebuke or telling-off.

32 - Turning a blind eye to some mistakes and being content to just hint about them, out of respect to the person who is making the mistake

"And (remember) when the Prophet disclosed a matter in confidence to one of his wives (Hafsah), so when she told it (to another, i.e., 'Aa'ishah), and Allaah made it known to him, he informed part thereof and left a part. Then when he told her (Hafsah) thereof, she said: 'Who told you this?' He said, 'The All-Knower, the All-Aware (Allaah) has told me.'" [al-Tahreem 66:3 – interpretation of the meaning]

Al-Qaasimi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in *Mahaasin al-Ta'weel*:

"*'And remember when the Prophet'* refers to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). *'To one of his wives'* refers to Hafsah. *'A matter in confidence'* means that she was not allowed to disclose it, or what he forbade for himself although Allaah had allowed it. *'When she told it'* means that she told the secret to her companion ('Aa'ishah). *'Allaah made it known to him'* means that Allaah told him what Hafsah had told 'Aa'ishah. *'He informed part thereof'* means that he told her part of what she had divulged as a rebuke; *'and left a part'* means that he did not say some of it, out of respect to her."

It is noted in *al-Ikleel*: "The aayah indicates that there is nothing wrong with speaking in a secretive way to one whom you trust such as a spouse or friend, and that he or she is obliged to keep the secret. The aayah also indicates good treatment of wives, gentleness when rebuking and refraining from seeking out every fault." (*Mahaasin al-Ta'weel*, 16/222)

Al-Hasan said: "No noble person will pick on every little fault." Sufyaan said: "Turning a blind eye is the action of noble people."

33 - Helping a Muslim to correct his mistake

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "Whilst we were sitting with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man came to him and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I am doomed!' He said, 'What is the matter with you?' He said, 'I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.' The Messenger of Allaah

(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Are you able to set a slave free?' He said, 'No.' He asked, 'Can you fast for two consecutive months?' He said, 'No.' he said, 'Can you feed sixty poor persons?' He said, 'No.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said nothing more about the matter for a while, and whilst we were sitting there like that, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was brought a large vessel full of dates. He said, 'Where is the one who was asking just now?' The man said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take this and give it in charity.' The man said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, is there anyone poorer between al-Harratayn [i.e., in Madeenah] than my family?' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) smiled so broadly that his eyeteeth could be seen, then he said, 'Feed it to your family.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, no. 1936).

According to a report narrated by Ahmad from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), whilst the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sitting in the shade of a large tree, a man came to him and said, "I am burnt, O Messenger of Allaah!" He said, "What is the matter with you?" He said, "I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting." 'Aa'ishah said: this was in Ramadaan. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him, "Sit down." So he sat down at the edge of the group of people. Then a man brought a donkey on which was a vessel of dates, and said, "This is my sadaqah (charity), O Messenger of Allaah." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Where is the burnt one who was here just now?" The man said, "Here I am, O Messenger of Allaah." He said, "Take this and give it in charity." He said, "To whom should I give it except myself? By the One Who sent you with the truth, I do not have anything for myself and my children." He said, "Then take it," so he took it. (*al-Musnad,* 6/276)

34 - Meeting with the person who has made the mistake to talk it over

In *Saheeh al-Bukhaari* it is reported that 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr said: "My father married me to a woman from a good family. He used to come and check on his daughter in law, and ask her about her husband. She would say, 'What a good man he is. He has never slept in our bed or disturbed us since we got married.' When this had gone on for a long time, he mentioned it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who said, 'Let me meet with him.' So I met with him after that, and he said, 'How often do you fast?' I said, 'Every day.' He said, 'How often do you complete the Qur'aan?' I said, 'Every night.' He said, 'Fast three days of every month, and complete the Qur'aan once a month.' I said, 'I can do more than that.' He said, 'Fast three days every week.' I said, 'I can do more than that.' He said, 'Don't fast for two days, then fast for one day.' I said, 'I can do more than that.' He said, 'Observe the best kind of fast, the fast of Dawood, fasting one day then not fasting the next, and complete the Qur'aan once every seven days.' I wish that I had accepted the dispensation of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), because when I became old and weak I started to read one seventh of the Qur'aan to my family during the day, and whatever I read during the day makes it easier to complete it at night. If I want to help myself, I do not fast for a number of days, then I count the number of days I did not fast and fast the same number of days. I do not want to give up something that I promised the Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) I would do before he died." Abu 'Abd-Allaah said: "Some of them said in three, and in five, and most of them said in seven." (*al-Fath*, 5052)

A report narrated by Ahmad describes the matter more clearly and contains important lessons: 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr said: "My father married me to a woman from Quraysh. When she entered upon me I did not approach her because I was so enthusiastic about worshipping Allaah by fasting and praying. 'Amr ibn al-'Aas came to his daughter in law and asked her, 'How do you find your husband?' She said, 'He is the best of men, or he is like the best of husbands among men. He has never disturbed us and he has never slept in our bed.' So he came to me and told me off. (Ibn al-Atheer said: … according to another hadeeth, 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas said: 'So my father came to me and told me off.' *Al-Nihaayah* 3/200). He said, 'I married you to a woman from a good family of Quraysh, and you are neglecting her (i.e., not treating her as a wife) and you are doing such and such.' Then he went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and complained about me. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent for me and I came to him. He said to me, 'Do you fast during the day?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Do you pray (*qiyaam*) at night?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'But I fast and I break my fast, I pray and I sleep, and I touch women [my wives]. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah has nothing to do with me.' He said, 'Read the Qur'aan once a month.' I said, 'I can do more than that.' He said, 'Read it once every ten days.' I said, 'I can do more than that.' One of them – either Husayn or Mugheerah – said, 'Read it every three days.' He [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said: 'Fast three days of every month.' I said, 'I can do more than that.' He kept increasing the number until he said, 'Fast one day and do not fast the next day. This is the best of fasts, the fast of my brother Dawood.' Husayn said in his narration of the hadeeth: then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Every worshipper has a time when he is motivated and keen, and after every such time comes a time of slackening, where he either follows the Sunnah or follows bid'ah. The one whose slackening follows Sunnah is guided, but the one whose slackening follows bid'ah is doomed.'" Mujaahid said: "When 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr grew old and weak, he would fast for several days at a time, so that he could grow stronger, then he would break his fast for a similar number of days. He would read his portion of the Qur'aan in like manner, sometimes reading more, sometimes reading less, so that he would finish the entire Qur'aan in seven days or in three days. After that he would say, 'I wish that I had accepted the dispensation of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), for it would be better for me than what I chose for myself, or I left him saying that I would do something and I would hate to do something else.'" (*Al-Musnad*, 2/158. Ahmad Shaakir said: its isnaad is saheeh. *Tahqeeq al-Musnad*, no. 6477).

Among the things we learn from this story are:

1. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) understood the cause of the problem, which was that ['Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr] was exhausting himself in worship to the point that he did not have time to take care of his duties towards his wife, so he was falling short.

2. The principle of paying due attention to everyone who has rights over one applies to anyone who is preoccupied with matters of worship, such as a student who is giving so many lessons, or a daa'iyah who is so busy with his da'wah that his wife complains of mistreatment. This can lead to a loss of balance in carrying out different acts of worship and dividing one's time among all those who are making rightful claims on it. So there is nothing wrong with the teacher reducing the number of lessons he gives, or the daa'iyah reducing his activities so as to allow himself enough time to take care of his home, wife and children, and give them their rights as regards guidance, companionship and education.

35 - Speaking bluntly to a person about the mistake he is making

Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that Abu Dharr said: "There was an argument between me and another man. His mother was a non-Arab, and I said something insulting about her. He mentioned this to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who asked me, 'Did you trade insults with so-and-so?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Did you say something insulting about his mother?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You are a man who still has something of jaahiliyyah in you.' I said, 'I said what I said because I am getting old.' He said, 'Yes, but they are your brothers. Allaah has given you power over them, but whoever is given power over someone, let him feed him as he feeds himself, clothe him as he clothes himself, and not give him more work to do than he is able. If he does give him too much work, let him help him.'" (*Fath*, 6050)

In *Saheeh Muslim* it is reported that Abu Dharr (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "I had an argument with one of my brothers. His mother was non-Arab, and I said something insulting to him about his mother. He complained about me to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) met me, he said, 'O Abu Dharr, you are a man who still has something of jaahiliyyah in him.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, whoever insults a person, people will insult his father and mother.' He said, 'O Abu Dharr, you are a man who still has something of jaahiliyyah in him. They are your brothers, and Allaah has given you power over them, so feed them as you feed yourself and clothe them as you clothe yourself. Do not give them more work than they can do, and if you give them too much to do, then help them.'" (*Saheeh Muslim*, no. 1661).

[It appears that the man's mother was a slave. Translator]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) spoke in this straightforward and open manner to Abu Dharr because he knew he would accept it. Such a blunt approach can be a useful method that saves times and energy, and gets the point across in the easiest manner, but it should only be done when it is appropraite to the situation and the people involved.

This direct approach may be better not used if it will lead to something worse or if it means that a greater interest will not be achieved, for example if the person making the mistake is in a position of power and authority and would not accept such frank comments, or if a direct approach would cause too much embarrassment to the person

who is doing wrong. It should also not be used if the person is extra sensitive and is likely to react badly. Undoubtedly a direct approach will be too much for a person to take if it is made in a spirit of confrontation and with the aim of causing embarrassment and showing him up at the time when his critic appears superior. Similarly it is essential to be cautious about using "indirect" methods whose multiple negative effects may outweigh the benefits of a direct approach, because they may make the wrongdoer think that the one who is advising him thinks he is stupid or that he is playing about, or because they may offend him because he thinks he is making snide remarks. This way of pointing out what is right may not be effective, because what is being said may not be clear to the person addressed, so he will keep on making the mistake. Generally speaking, people differ when it comes to accepting advice, and the right approach will differ in each case, but a good attitude in discussing mistakes and guiding people will also have the greatest effect in achieving the desired goal.

36 - Persuading a person that he is making a mistake

Engaging in a discussion with a wrongdoer with the aim of convincing him may lead to the removal of the blinkers over his eyes and bringing him back to the Straight Path. An example of this is the report narrated by al-Tabaraani (may Allaah have mercy on him) in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* from Abu Umaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him), who said that a young man came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, give me permission to commit zinaa (fornication or adultery)." The people shouted [at him] and [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] said, "Stop it!' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Let him calm down. Come here." He came and sat in front of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who said to him, "Would you like it for your mother?" He said, "No." He said, "Likewise, people do not like it for their mothers. Would you like it for your daughter?" He said, "No." He said, "Likewise, people do not like it for their daughters. Would you like it for your sister?" He said, "No." He said, "Likewise, people do not like it for their sisters. Would you like it for your (paternal) aunt?" He said, "No." He said, "Likewise, people do not like it for their (paternal) aunts. Would you like it for your (maternal) aunt?" He said, "No." He said, "Likewise, people do not like it for their (maternal) aunts." Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) put his hand on his chest and said, "O Allaah, forgive his sins, purify his heart and make him chaste." (Al-Tabaraani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer*, 7679 and 7759. Additional material is included between square brackets).

37 - Making a person understand that his flimsy excuse is not acceptable

Some people who make mistakes try to offer made-up, unacceptable excuses, especially when they are caught red-handed. Indeed, some of them may appear to be stammering when they give their flimsy excuses, especially those who are not good at lying because they are basically good at heart. How should the educator act when he comes across a situation like this? The following story demonstrates the brilliant attitude of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when dealing with one of his

Companions in a situation of this nature. The story also shows us how the educator should persistently follow up until the person gives up his wrong attitude.

Khuwwaat ibn Jubayr (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "We made camp with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) at Mar al-Zahraan (a place near Makkah). I came out of my tent and saw some women talking amongst themselves. I liked them, so I went back, got out my trunk and took out a *hillah* (a suit of clothes). I put it on and came and sat with them. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out and said, 'O Abu 'Abd-Allaah!!" (i.e., he was reprimanding him for sitting with those non-mahrem women). When I saw the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), I got scared and started stammering (trying to come up with an excuse). I said, "O Messenger of Allaah, my camel got lost and I am looking for a rope to restrain it" (i.e., he came up with a false excuse to justify what he had done). He left, and I followed him. He threw his cloak at me and went in among some araak trees – and it is as if I can see the whiteness of his back against the greenness of the araak trees. He answered the call of nature and did wudoo', and turned (to me) with the water dripping from his beard onto his chest, and said: "O Abu 'Abd-Allaah, what happened to your lost camel?" Then we continued on our journey, and whenever he caught up with me, he would say, "Assalaamu aleika Abu 'Abd-Allaah. What happened to that lost camel?" When I realized this, I hastened on to Madeenah and avoided the mosque and gatherings where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was present. When this had gone on for a long time, I tried to go to the mosque when no one else was around. I went to the mosque and started to pray, but the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out of one of his apartments and started to pray two short rak'ahs. I made my prayer long, hoping that he would go away and leave me. He said, 'Make it as long as you like, O Abu 'Abd-Allaah, for I am not leaving until you finish.' I said to myself, 'By Allaah, I should apologize to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and make him happy.' When I had finished, he said, '*Al-salaamu 'alayka*, O Abu 'Abd-Allaah. What happened to your lost camel?' I said, 'By the One Who sent you with the truth, that camel has never gotten lost since the time I became a Muslim.' He said, 'May Allaah have mercy on you' three times, then he never mentioned it again." (Al-Haythami said: al-Tabaraani reported it with two isnaads. The men of one of them are all saheeh apart from al-Jarraah ibn Mukhallad, who is thiqah. *Al-Majma'*, 9/401. Upon referring to *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* by al-Tabaraani, 4/203, it becomes clear that the report from Zayd ibn Aslam is talking about Khuwwaat ibn Jubayr, who said, 'We made camp …' In the biography of Khuwwaat (may Allaah be pleased with him) in *al-Tahdheeb* it says: Zayd ibn Aslam reported *mursal* from him. In *al-Isaabah* it says that Khuwwaat died in 40 or 42 AH, and in *al-Siyar* it says that Zayd ibn Aslam died in 136 AH; on this basis there is a break in the isnaad).

This is a brilliant study in training and the use of wise strategies to achieve the desired result. We may also learn the following points from this story:

1. A person who has committed a sin will feel shy of a respected leader when he catches him out.

2. The way the educator looks at and questions a person – even though it may be very brief – will have a great impact on him.

3. Not discussing a false excuse at the time of hearing it – even though it is clearly made up – and turning away from the person may be enough to make him realize that his excuse is not acceptable, which will motivate him to repent and apologize. This is what we understand from the phrase "he left."

4. The good educator is the one who makes the person who has made a mistake feel too shy of him, so that he tries to hide away from him, but at the same time, his need for him makes him want to come to him. Then the latter takes precedence over the former.

5. The change of attitude towards the wrongdoer is based – in this case – on the wrongdoer's admission that he was wrong and his giving up the thing he had done.

If the educator or leader is held in high esteem by his companions, then if he rebukes one of them or tells him that he has made a mistake, this will have an effect on him. The leader should pay attention to the interests of others when rebuking one of his companions, so that all may benefit from it. However, this should not mean that he should ignore any negative effect on that particular individual. That can be dealt with and its effects limited in many ways, even though a third party, as al-Mugheerah did when he asked 'Umar to be a mediator whilst at the same time explaining the situation and affirming how highly the leader thinks of the follower.

38 - Paying attention to things that are inherent in human nature

An example of this is the jealousy of women, especially in the case of co-wives, some of whom may make mistakes that, if they were made by anyone else under normal circumstances, would be treated quite differently. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pay special attention to the issue of jealousy among his wives and the mistakes that were made by them as a result, and the patience, justice and fairness with which he handled the matter are plain to see. An example of this is the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his *Saheeh* from Anas, who said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was with one of his wives when another of the Mothers of the Believers sent a big vessel full of food to him. The wife in whose house the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was struck the hand of the servant, and the vessel fell and broke in two. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) picked up the pieces and put them together, then he gathered up the food that had been in the vessel and said, 'Your mother is jealous.' Then he asked the servant to wait until he was given the vessel belonging to the wife in whose house he was, and he sent the whole vessel to the wife whose vessel had been broken, and kept the broken vessel in the house of the one who had broken it." (*Fath,* 5225)

According to a report narrated by al-Nisaa'i (*Kitaab 'Ishrat al-Nisaa'*), Umm Salamah brought some food in a vessel belonging to her to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions, then 'Aa'ishah came wrapped in a garment, carrying a stone, which she threw and broke the vessel. The

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) put the two halves back together and said, "Eat, your mother is jealous" twice, then he took 'Aa'ishah's vessel and sent it to Umm Salamah, and gave Umm Salamah's vessel to 'Aa'ishah.

According to a report narrated by al-Daarimi (*Kitaab al-Buyoo', Baab man kasara shay'an fa 'alayhi mithluhu*) from Anas, he said: "One of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent him a vessel in which was some *thareed* [a dish of sopped bread, meat and broth], when he was in the house of one of his other wives, who struck the vessel and broke it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) started to pick up the *thareed* and put it back into the vessel, saying, 'Eat, your mother is jealous…'"

Women's jealousy is an inherent part of their nature, that may cause them to do bad things and prevent them from seeing the consequences of their actions. It was said that when a woman is jealous, she cannot see the bottom of a valley from its top.

Conclusion

Following this exploration of the Sunnah and the methods which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used in dealing with people's mistakes, we should conclude by mentioning the following points:

1. Correcting mistakes is obligatory and very important. It is part of naseehah (giving sincere advice) and forbidding what is evil, but it should be remembered that Islam is not only about forbidding what is evil; we are also commanded to enjoin what is good.
2. Education and training are not merely the matter of correcting mistakes; they also involve teaching and showing the basic principles of religion and the rules of sharee'ah, and using various methods to establish these concepts firmly in people's minds and hearts, by example, by exhorting them, by telling stories, by discussing incidents, etc. From this it is clear that some parents and teachers are falling short by confining their efforts only to addressing mistakes without paying due attention to teaching the basics or dealing with mistakes before they happen by instilling that which will protect people from committing mistakes in the first place, or at least reduce their impact.
3. It is clear from the incidents and stories mentioned above that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used different approaches in dealing with different mistakes. This is because circumstances and personalities vary. Whoever understands this and wants to follow suit must compare the situation he is dealing with, with these examples to find the one that most closely resembles it, so that he can determine the most appropriate approach to use.

We ask Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, to guide us and protect us, to make us openers of good and closers of evil, and to guide others through us, for He is the All-Hearing, the Ever-Near, Who answers prayers. He is the Best of supporters and the Best of helpers, and He is the Guide to the Straight Path. May Allaah bless the

Unlettered Prophet and all his family and companions. Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds.